


SEVEN COLOUR SECTIONS: BRITAIN'S BEST VALUE SATURDAY PAPER

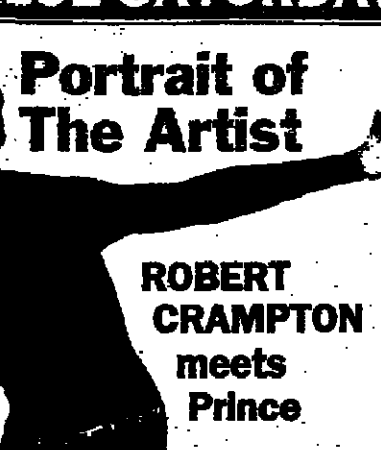
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Matthew Parris
 on sons and mothers




THE TIMES

50P

No. 66,257

SATURDAY JULY 18 1998

http://www.the-times.co.uk

Brown sticks to his guns on joining European single currency

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

GORDON BROWN promised yesterday that Labour would not "surrender or subordinate" Britain's national interest as he stood firm on his policy on the European single currency.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that ruling out monetary union in principle — even if the economic benefits were overwhelming — was not the right way to advance the national interest.

But he told a conference organised by The News Corporation, parent company of *The Times*, Mr Brown said that the benefits of a single currency would have to be unambiguous for Britain to go in.

And he accepted that there were constitutional implications for Britain in joining a single currency — one of the key arguments of the diehard critics of monetary union.

Mr Brown was speaking at the conference in Sun Valley, Idaho, just three weeks after *The Sun*, which is also in The News Corpora-

tion stable, asked whether Tony Blair was "the most dangerous man in Britain" because of his increasing support for monetary union. The Chancellor was therefore perceived yesterday as entering the lion's den and there was never any question but that he would stick to his guns.

He said that his statement to the Commons last October, when he effectively ruled out membership before the next general election but hinted that a decision could come soon afterwards, would stand. He

did not say outright yesterday that he favoured the single currency in principle. But recalling his October statement he said: "I said that in principle we could see benefits in monetary union. I did not say there are no constitutional implications of a single currency."

"What I did say is that it is because of this that the economic benefits to the UK, as set out in our five economic tests, must be clear and unambiguous. To rule out monetary union in principle, and to be prepared to do so even if the

economic benefits were overwhelming, is not the right way to advance the British national interest.

"So this is our policy and it will not change — any decision on membership of the single currency will be made in the national economic interest."

Labour was determined to see Britain fully integrated into a world economy based on free trade, open markets and greater competition. "We have no intention of surrendering or subordinating the British

national interest. Ours is a mature patriotism." Britain had to look at how it would be affected by the single currency, given that 50 per cent of its trade was with Europe. The euro would cover an area accounting for 20 per cent of global trade — as much as the US — and would be a global currency. "Rather than standing on the sidelines unable to influence the course of the European debate, the Government will be engaged and constructive in setting out our ideas for its future."

Although attention was inevitably focused on his remarks on monetary union, the Chancellor used his speech to call for greater international co-operation and economic reform to combat instability. In the new global marketplace national governments could not retreat behind old frontiers, because there were no frontiers. Recent weeks had demonstrated "the size, the speed and sheer ingenuity of global markets make them more dynamic and more

Continued on page 2, col 5

Staff car park spaces to cost £150 a year

By Arthur Leathley, Transport Correspondent

A "COMMUTER TAX" averaging £150 a year is to be imposed on individual staff parking spaces as ministers step up their crusade to combat traffic congestion.

Plans to charge businesses for providing parking for some six million employees will be unveiled next week as part of a huge package of measures to tackle traffic jams and raise money for public transport.

The workplace parking charge, which is expected to be introduced in 2001, will be levied by councils and the money used for local transport improvements. Although the employer will be responsible for paying the charge, some firms have indicated they will pass the charge on to staff.

The charge, likely to rise to at least £500 a space in central London, will be set individually by councils and is expected to raise more than £3 billion in its first five years and some £1 billion a year by 2006 — the equivalent of almost half the money now spent on building and maintaining roads.

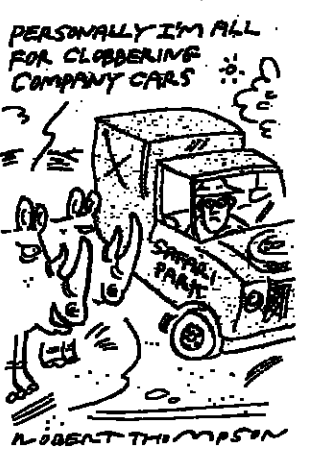
John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, will announce his plans in the Commons on Monday, when he will have to defend the Government against accusations that the charges are part of an "anti-car" campaign.

He will argue that the money raised, together with an additional £1.1 billion set aside this week to tackle congestion, will start to reverse decades of under-invest-

ment in public transport. Mr Prescott is keen to curb unnecessary car use, especially to work, and recent research carried out by pressure group Transport 2000 suggests that even a £100 charge would reduce workplace parking by a fifth over 10 years.

Companies will have to declare the number of spaces that are reserved for staff parking. However, ministers have backed away from plans to extend the charge to supermarkets and retail centres, viewing the proposal as too complex in the early stages. Exemptions are being considered for smaller firms, possibly with fewer than 20 spaces.

In defending the proposed charge, ministers will point to the current uniform business rate, where charges on companies include an amount on each parking space, although it is often defined as an overall measurement. In central



Justin Rose celebrates with his mother Annie yesterday after "the round of my life"

Justin Rose, 17, leads the Open

By John Hopkins

GOLF found a new young hero at the Open yesterday when Justin Rose, a 17-year-old from Hampshire, set Royal Birkdale alight with a brilliant round of 66 over the testing, windy links.

Rose, who seems set to become the Michael Owen of his sport, outscored most of the world's best professionals, including Tiger Woods and Lee Westwood. At the halfway stage of the championship at Southport, Merseyside, he had played better than every member of the Europe and US Ryder Cup teams, despite being two weeks short of his 18th birthday.

"This is a dream for me," Rose, who is 6ft 11in tall and weighs 10st 7lb, said last night. "I am delighted: this is the round of my life." His heroes, he said, were Ernie Els and Nick Price.

David Leadbetter, the world's leading golf coach, saw Rose play in Florida this year. "I thought a lot of Justin when I first saw him: he was very mature, well ahead of his years. There is no question he is one of the best 17-year-olds I have ever seen."

Rose was born in South Africa and was already wielding plastic golf clubs when he was 11 months old. He moved to England with his parents and sister when he was five. He first came to prominence in 1995 when, still a pupil at the Robert Mays School in Odiham, he narrowly failed to qualify for that year's Open at St Andrews.

He left school after taking

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 High winds caused havoc, stopping play for half an hour... pages 29-31
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Clinton's bodyguards must speak
FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE US Supreme Court delivered a potentially disastrous blow to President Clinton last night when it insisted that his personal bodyguards testify in the Monica Lewinsky inquiry.

The ruling by Chief Justice William Rehnquist brought comparison with the Supreme Court order in 1974 that President Nixon must surrender the Watergate tapes.

Mr Rehnquist, who returned from holiday in Austria to issue an emergency ruling, acted on what was described as a "High Noon deadline" minutes after seven agents arrived at the courthouse to begin testimony before Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor, and a grand jury.

The group included Larry Cockell, the first black leader of the President's plainclothes bodyguards, and six uniformed officers.

Yeltsin apologises for massacre of Romanovs
Michael Binyon watches as Russia buries the Tsar and its shame

WITH his hand on his heart, President Yeltsin yesterday offered a deep bow of repentance and national atonement to the newly interred remains of Tsar Nicholas II in the St Petersburg vault where his Romanov ancestors are buried.

It is the first time a Russian head of state has led his nation in official apology for the murder, 80 years ago to the day, of the last Tsar and his family by Bolshevik soldiers. At the end of a moving ceremony in the Cathedral of the Peter and Paul Fortress Mr Yeltsin, watched by millions of Russians across the country, stood in sombre silence before the vault while his wife, Naina, crossed herself.

The President, lending last-minute dignity and political weight to the ceremony, declared at the start of the 45-minute service that he had no option but to present to tell the truth. "The massacre of the Tsar was one of the most shameful pages of our history," he said. "By burying the remains of the victims we want to expiate the sins of our ancestors."

In a portentous and controversial admission, he added: "We are all guilty. It is impossible to lie to ourselves by justifying the senseless cruelty on political grounds. Guilty are those who committed this heinous crime, and those who have been justifying it for decades — all of us."

The ceremony began at noon, under brilliant sun, in one of Russia's most historic churches. It had been freshly painted to receive more than 50 members of the Romanov family as well as ambassadors and representatives of 120

£150m to make blood safe

The cost of protecting blood products from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease infection rose to £150 million a year when the Government announced that all transfusion donations must have white cells removed to minimise the risks. The treatment will cost £80 million: £70 million is already being spent on protecting plasma supplies. Page 6

Lawrence inquiry


The inquiry into the murder of the black South London teenager Stephen Lawrence concludes its first stage on Monday. Does the evidence point to something more sinister than a bungled investigation? Pages 10, 11

THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

The most powerful men in the Anglican church have arrived from all over the world to contemplate genocide, sexuality and national debt... page 18 and Weekend

Ghosts of history, page 9

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Films

CAN KENNETH BRANAGH PUT THE GILT ON ALTMAN'S GINGERBREAD MAN?

In the FREE glossy magazine

And finance And finance And finance

SOPHIE MARCEAU INHERITS BARRONS CROWN

Surgeons prepare to adjust Hague's turn to the left

By Polly Newton Political Reporter

SURGEONS are poised to pull off a trick which Tory spin-doctors have tried and failed: the remoulding of William Hague.

day that he is on the waiting list for the operation, which doctors hope will prevent a recurrence of the acute sinusitis last month that forced him to take two weeks off.

At the moment, one side is partially blocked by the septum, exacerbating the build-up of mucus that causes sinusitis.

such injury. "He had never realised there was any problem there whatsoever until the sinusitis occurred."

need "a couple of days" in hospital afterwards. "He will have a rather sore nose for a couple of days," Dr Stunford said.

than if they are full of mucus. Although it is not known exactly how long Mr Hague must wait, a spokeswoman for the hospital said that all patients were treated within 12 months.

Noraid to raise cash for IRA dissidents

By Audrey Magee

A NEW YORK lawyer who raised millions of pounds for Sinn Fein and the IRA in the United States is now planning to raise money for the growing band of dissident republicans.

Martin Galvin, 47, intends setting up a new group in America to raise funds for the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, the dissident republican group founded last year by Bernadette Sands McKevitt, sister of the IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands who died in 1981.

The movement is linked to the "Real IRA" which in recent months has carried out bomb and mortar attacks on towns in Northern Ireland.

Mr Galvin, a hardline republican banned by the British Government from Northern Ireland in 1984, now wants to help the dissidents. During his week-long visit to Ireland which ended yesterday, he held a series of meetings with republicans on both sides of the border and spoke at a fund-raising event for Ronan McLoughlin, a "Real IRA" member shot dead by police in May during a foiled raid on a security van.

"We are certainly considering setting up something in the United States that would support what are being described as dissident republican prisoners," Mr Galvin told The Irish News, the Belfast-based nationalist newspaper.

The involvement of Mr Galvin is a considerable coup for the dissidents. The former district attorney was pivotal to the success of Noraid which has raised millions for Sinn Fein and the IRA.

Advisers to help pensioners claim full benefits

By Alexandra Frean, Social Affairs Correspondent

THOUSANDS of personal advisers are to be recruited to help ensure that the poorest pensioners claim and receive the welfare benefits to which they are entitled.

The initiative is part of a £2.5 billion package of help for the elderly, which is aimed at narrowing the growing gap between the richest and poorest pensioners by guaranteeing a minimum weekly income of £75 for all single pensioners and £116 for a couple.

Up to 1.5 million of the very poorest pensioners, who have savings of less than £8,000 and a weekly income of less than £10 could benefit from the reforms. This figure includes an estimated one million pensioners receiving the basic state pension who are eligible for income support, but who fail to claim it.

Ms Harman also promised to extend special £20 winter fuel payments for a further three years after the existing scheme finishes at the end of next winter. The reforms will cost an estimated £75 million over three years.

New concessionary travel plans are to be announced on Monday by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister. The reforms follow the announcement on Thursday by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, that charges for eye tests will be abolished for pensioners.

Ms Harman said that by keeping the basic state pension at its current levels and increasing the amount of money pensioners receive through the pensioner premium on income support, the Government could be sure of targeting the people who needed the money most.

To have increased the basic state pension for all pensioners within the same budget would have resulted in each pensioner receiving less than £1, she said.

The reforms will increase the amount of state support received by single pensioners from £70.45 to £75.00 and the amount going to pensioner couples from £109.35 to £129.90.

A key to delivering the reforms will be the role played by personal advisers, who will visit pensioners to check they are receiving all the state support to which they are entitled.

Ms Harman said that the experience of the advisers in the nine areas where the scheme has been piloted showed that even very small increases in income can make a huge difference to the daily lives of the very poor.

"One woman told me that instead of just buying two apples when she goes shopping, she can now buy a pound of apples. Another woman said it now meant that she always had a pound in her pocket," she said. Even

where pensioners found they were not entitled to the extra money, they were grateful for the fact that someone had "popped in to see they were OK," Ms Harman added.

Pensioner groups welcomed the increases as a step in the right direction, but called for more money.

Sally Greengross, director general of Age Concern England, said: "We are delighted that the Government has at last recognised the urgent need to help our poorest pensioners. This is a step in the right direction."

But she added: "Pensioners need £150 a week for a modest lifestyle. This is the price of dignity and independence."

Mervyn Kohler, head of public affairs for Help the Aged, said: "The proposals outlined today are definitely a step in the right direction."

He welcomed the introduction of pension advisers. "This is the right way forward. We need human beings visiting and talking to pensioners and helping them fill in forms."

Ian Duncan-Smith, the Shadow Social Security Secretary, said the measures would act as a disincentive to saving, since those with more than £8,000 would not be entitled to the income support premium.

"Those that have saved will find their efforts will have been in vain as non-savers will have their incomes made up through extra social security spending," he said.



Prince Michael of Kent before yesterday's ceremony.

Yeltsin says sorry for murder of Romanovs

Continued from page 1 wafted across the nine tiny coffins, arranged in a pyramid, containing the bones of Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, three of their daughters, the family doctor and three servants. Three times a deacon intoned the prayer beseeching eternal remembrance.

The simple service was in keeping with the personal modesty of the Tsar: the only jarring note was the priest's awkward omission of any names in commending their souls to God, a reflection of the ambiguous stance taken by the patriarchate which still does not acknowledge the remains as genuine.

Then, one by one, as the clergy sang a dirge, the coffins were borne by officers in khaki uniform into the side chapel of St Catherine's, where Nicholas and his family used to worship. Each was placed on a pedestal before being lowered into the vault.

The first to be buried was the valet, Trupp, the only Roman Catholic among the nine. The two other servants and family doctor, Yevgeni Botkin, followed. A deep bell began to toll as the three daughters, Olga, Anastasia and Tatyana, were lowered on to a platform placed above the first four coffins. Finally came Alexandra and Nicholas.

From the banks of the Neva, cannons blazed a 19-gun salute, two less than the customary 21, because the Tsar abdicated before his death.

Afterwards, Mr Yeltsin greeted the family. Prince Michael of Kent was the only senior member of a European royal family to attend.

Ghosts of history, page 9

Blanket ban on oil rig dumping

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

A BAN on the dumping of all steel rigs and installations was announced by the Government yesterday ahead of next week's conference on the health of the North-East Atlantic.

The move, which dismayed the oil industry, means that only giant concrete rigs of which Britain has 11, Norway 14 and other countries four, will be left in the North Sea at the end of their working lives.

The Government had been under pressure from environmental groups and other European countries who are members of the Oslo Paris Commission (OSPAR).

Britain and the oil industry had agreed to 70 per cent of the 475 steel installations in UK waters being removed to land. It had been suggested that for about 60 large steel platforms,

some of which are as tall as the Eiffel Tower, other options should be allowed including dumping or topping with the ultimate decision made on a "case by case basis".

But Michael Meacher, Environment Minister, speaking in advance of the OSPAR meeting in Portugal, said yesterday: "The Government's new position is no dumping and no topping of large steel installations... there will be a complete ban on the dumping of steel installations."

James May, director-general of the UK Offshore Operators Association, said: "The industry's position continues to favour case by case assessments for the largest structures... balancing environmental impacts on land, sea and air, safety, cost and technical feasibility."

Brown sticks to his guns on the euro

Continued from page 1 volatile than their old national counterparts.

"While the recent turmoil in world economics is centred in a handful of Asian countries, and with its effects most sharply felt in Asia, it is a global problem not an Asian problem and it is a problem of the modern age.

"The turbulent period is not over. Government must remain vigilant, not least against the threat of protectionism which must not be allowed to return as inevitable adjustments take place over the next year."

Mr Brown suggested that it might surprise his audience to know that the Labour Government wanted to go further than Margaret Thatcher in creating an enterprising society. He wanted to promote and extend competition aggressively and said that failure to do that had been a central cause of Britain's relative decline this century.

"People say that Mrs Thatcher created an enterprising society. I say there is still

not enough enterprise and we have to do better," Mr Brown said.

In a week that has seen British supermarkets blocked from selling branded goods at cheap prices, the Chancellor reaffirmed his own commitment to level up the prices of goods — not just within the EU, but across the world. Why were washing machines and dishwashers 30 per cent more expensive in the UK than in the US, and restaurant and hotel prices 50 per cent more expensive?

"Tax regimes are part of the answer, but there is no doubt that insufficient competition with cosy cartels is a further explanation."

"Let no-one be in any doubt about our commitment to free trade and our resistance to protectionism... we are not only interested in the World Trade Organisation's proposals for change but in the idea of a great transatlantic market-place stretching across Europe and America involving some 600 million consumers and citizens."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Medical students 'cheated in exams'

An investigation was launched at Scotland's oldest university, St Andrews, yesterday amid allegations that medical students cheated during examinations and intimidated lecturers. The claims emerged in a leaked memorandum sent by four staff to Steve Homans, head of the School of Biomedical Sciences.

The memo complained of lax discipline during practical lectures — in one incident students were said to have thrown pieces of pig's heart and lung at each other during a first-year anatomy test — cheating during exams and a lowering of standards to increase pass rates. The memo was signed by three practical demonstrators at the medical school, who oversee students' anatomy work, and a technician. On another occasion last year a student was allegedly caught cheating during a practical exam and, although the offence was admitted, the trainee doctor was still given a pass mark.

Ulster eggs alert

Public health officials yesterday warned people in Northern Ireland not to eat raw eggs or products such as mayonnaise or mousses after the Agriculture Department in Dublin said that salmonella outbreaks in the Republic were traced to eggs imported from the north. However, agriculture officials in Northern Ireland said that no firm link between the eggs and the outbreak had yet been established.

Student rapist jailed

A drama student who raped a classmate after luring her to rehearse scenes from Last Tango in Paris behaved like "a wild animal", an Old Bailey judge said yesterday. Sentencing James Reith, 26, to five years in prison, Judge Cocker said his victim may have been "a little naive" and trusting, but when she refused to take part in a particularly erotic scene Reith "completely snapped".

Murder jury sent home

A jury trying the childminder Helen Stacey, 41, for the murder of five-month-old Joseph Mackin was sent home for the weekend after failing to reach a verdict. Mr Justice Blöfeld told the eight women and four men to return on Monday when he will give them a direction allowing a majority verdict. Mrs Stacey is accused at Norwich Crown Court of shaking the baby to death in a fit of temper.

Carer stole from widow

A social services care assistant who befriended an elderly widow took £37,000 of her savings. Philip Clutter, 35, from Birmingham, agreed to look after Phyllis Glover when she moved into the same street in Handsworth in January 1995. She agreed to give him a loan when he got into financial difficulties. Clutter was found guilty of obtaining property by deception by Birmingham Crown Court.

Jumbo Crossword

An incorrect date for submission of entries is given in today's Jumbo Crossword (Weekend, page 36). Entries should be sent to The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Thursday, July 30. The winner's name will be published on August 1.

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Teacher jailed for affair with underage boy

Court was told how mother-of-two seduced youth of 15 after giving him cannabis, reports Helen Johnstone

A RELIGIOUS education and English teacher was yesterday jailed after having a sexual relationship with a 15-year-old schoolboy.

The affair started when Lucy Hayward told the boy to sneak from his parents' house in the dead of night after a drug-taking session. The mother-of-two then told him to strip off his clothes, before seducing him. It marked the start of an affair that lasted for months and only came to light when the boy, who is now 16, ran away from home and complained to his family.

At a previous hearing, Hayward, 30, from Shrewsbury, Shropshire, admitted indecently assaulting the boy. She also admitted possessing cannabis and allowing the drug to be smoked at her home.

Jailing Hayward for two years, Judge Michael Mander told her: "Suppose you were a man and that the youngster was a girl, there would be no question whatsoever that you would be going to jail. And in

this day and age gender should make no difference. "You were a teacher and a respected and trusted member of the community. People living near you would have been happy that their children were spending time at the home of a teacher. You encouraged children to come to your house and plied them with drugs. You indulged in highly inappropriate sexual behaviour with a young boy who was so traumatised by it all that he left home.

"Anyone who behaved in this highly inappropriate manner can expect little mercy from any Crown Court judge. You indulged in a wholly inappropriate sexual relationship with this child. And, when confronted with it, you told lie, after lie, after lie."

Hayward, who is divorced with two daughters aged 10 and two, has been sacked from her post at the Abraham Darby School in Telford, Shropshire, and must now be included on the national sex

offenders register. The court heard that her children would probably go to live with the father of the younger child.

The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was not a pupil at the school.

A previous hearing heard that the boy was just one of a group of youths who frequented the teacher's home for cannabis sessions. It was after one of these sessions early last year that Hayward, a teacher for four years, told the boy to return to her for a rendezvous in the early hours.

The court heard they then had regular sex sessions together at the teacher's home.

Andrew Lockhart, prosecuting, told yesterday's hearing that during a telephone conversation, when Hayward was confronted by a friend of the boy's family, she had said: "I know I have slept with him, but I love him."

Police who raided her home found handcuffs, pornographic magazines, pictures of buttocks and a photograph of the boy dressed up in women's clothing. Simon Mills, for the defence, said Hayward, who was sent away to boarding school where she was raped by two boys at the age of 14, had led a troubled life as a result of which she tried to commit suicide in 1995.

In a recent interview, Hayward, the Millfield-educated daughter of a wealthy businessman who later abandoned her, said she kept an open house for teenagers to escape from a life full of trouble and pain to have some fun. She said the affair grew out of mutual feelings of respect and friendship.

The boy has since described being haunted by memories of the affair and of becoming withdrawn after losing his self-esteem. His mother said nobody had wanted to see Hayward jailed. "I think she comes across as a bit of a sad character more than anything else, but she has still done harm to my son," she said.



English teacher Hayward: "a bit of a sad character"



Atelier Versace by Donatella Versace, photographed by Dan Cunningham, has the house's trademark sex appeal

Donatella dons Versace mantle

By GRACE BRADBERRY
STYLE EDITOR

LESS than a week after the anniversary of her brother's death, Donatella Versace will unveil her first haute couture collection in Paris tonight. These pictures are the first of *Atelier Versace*, as designed by Donatella.

The fashion world must wait a few hours more before they can see the rest of the collection and judge whether Donatella can fully shoulder her brother's legacy. When Gianni Versace was

shot on the steps of his Miami home last summer, Donatella, 40, inherited the creative responsibility for a fashion empire worth an estimated \$800 million (£500 million).

There have been rumours that she would appoint an outsider to produce the *Atelier* collection but Donatella always insisted that she would take on the task herself. Last season she skipped the haute couture shows altogether, preferring to concentrate on the ready-to-wear collection, and the *Isante* and *Versus* lines. The shows were acclaimed,

with commentators praising the femininity that Donatella brought to the Versace style.

Now, however, with a new team of young designers around her — including four graduates of Central St Martin's — she is ready to prove to the world that she can produce a couture collection, regarded by many as the ultimate test of a designer's skill and creativity.

The show will be held as usual above the swimming pool at the Paris Ritz, though this time the catwalk is transparent, showing the water beneath.

Soldiers smuggled cocaine on ferry lager runs

By RUSSELL JENKINS

SEVEN soldiers face dismissal from their regiment yesterday for their role as couriers in an operation smuggling heroin, cocaine and Ecstasy from the Continent under the pretence of weekend lager runs.

The men, five serving and two former gunners of the 39th Royal Artillery, believed their status as servicemen gave them immunity from checks by Customs as they smuggled the drugs, worth £12.5 million, hidden in car door panels.

For more than a year, a joint Customs and police surveillance team tracked the "gunner runners" on midnight ferry trips from their barracks near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to Amsterdam and then on to the "drop" in Liverpool before returning in time for Monday-morning guard duty.

When Customs officers pounced in June last year at the French entrance to the Channel Tunnel, they found two gunners in a car in which £1 million worth of heroin, Ecstasy and amphetamines were concealed.

Three were found guilty this week at Liverpool Crown Court of conspiring to import drugs. Four others and two civilians had already pleaded guilty to drugs charges at an earlier date. They will be sentenced next week but are facing certain dismissal from the 282-year-old regiment.

Lieutenant-Colonel Clive Knightley, the regiment's commanding officer, said last night the soldiers had let down the Army very badly. The court was told the case has changed forever the way Customs officers view the constant passage of servicemen travelling to Europe on the way to postings.

In the dock were James Bull, 29, of Inskip, Skeithersdale, Lancashire; Dale Mills, 26, of Kingsheath, Northampton; and Kevin Jones, 31, of Hazelrigg, Northumberland.

Four more soldiers from the 39th are among six other men who have already pleaded guilty to drugs charges. They were Paul Bromley, 31, from Bamber Bridge, Preston; Peter Jackson, 30, of Burnage; Billy Stott, 23, of Oldham; and Paul Wright, 29, of Liverpool.

Sentence on road killer 'too lenient'

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A SENIOR police officer whose daughter was killed by a drunken driver yesterday criticised a judge for jailing the man for just 5½ years.

Stephen Pengelly, 37, had bet that he could set a record for driving to a motorway junction, in Devon. He lost control and his sports car collided head on at over 100mph with a car being driven by Charis Yeoman, 20, a student nurse. Miss Yeoman was on her way to see her parents at Easter last year. When Detective Chief Inspector Tim Yeoman went to look for his daughter, he found her dead in the wreckage.

Pengelly was able to refuse to allow hospital blood samples to be analysed by police. It emerged that he had drunk six pints of beer and ten shorts.

Mr Yeoman emphasised yesterday he was speaking as a parent, not as a police officer.

At Exeter Crown Court, Pengelly admitted causing death by dangerous driving. Judge Graham Neville also banned him for five years.

Man's family cleared over death plot charge

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE widow, son and daughter of a murdered businessman were yesterday cleared of accusations that they hired a hitman to kill him.

After a five-day hearing, a stipendiary magistrate ruled that the Crown Prosecution Service had not a shred of evidence against Jackie Leeming, 55, her daughter Jayne, 30 and son Stephen, 33, who together with Malcolm Herbert, 37, their family firm's accountant, were accused of conspiracy to murder.

Guy Hodgson, the York stipendiary magistrate, said North Yorkshire Police had failed to make a case. They had claimed Geoffrey Leeming, 63, was killed so the accused could use his money to save their ailing drain clearance business. He was stabbed violently nine times with a carving knife, including one blow through the heart, in the garage of his York home.

Giving judgment in the committal proceedings at which reporting restrictions

were lifted, Mr Hodgson said: "I have looked and looked, again and again but the evidence simply is not there. He said that he had no trouble rejecting the application of the prosecution to send the four for trial and added: "The police arrived at court with nothing more than a theory."

He said there was "nothing to support" their supposition. "They cannot support by evidence that there is a reasonable possibility the family were conspirators." He said that the prosecution had "attempted to produce solid bricks from straw", but he kept coming back to the view and had the gut reaction that the case rested not on evidence, but on suspicion.

He said the proceedings were not a trial of issues but an investigation as to whether there was sufficient evidence to put the accused on trial. But the only evidence produced was that someone was killed that night with a knife. He said the police were no nearer

today to knowing who was responsible than they were in October 1996 when Mr Leeming was found lying in a pool of blood.

Paul Worsley QC for the CPS, had claimed the Leeming family and the accountant "got rid" of Mr Leeming because he was standing in the way of their getting their hands on his fortune.

The four were committed to stand trial at Teesside Crown Court in September, accused of fraudulent trading.

Mrs Leeming said in a statement outside court: "Myself, Stephen and Jayne and my grandson Tom have been through a living nightmare for the last 20 months. My husband, their father who we dearly loved and who we miss every day was murdered."

"In the past year we have needed all our strength to fight these unfounded allegations. Now we would like some privacy to come to terms with the reality of Geoff's death and grieve in our own way."

Boy, 8, is freed after UN plea

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A BOY aged 8 seeking asylum who had spent six days in detention was released yesterday after the UN High Commissioner for Refugees made an official request to the Government.

The arrest of Luc Mangoung, who has spent most of his life in Britain, has embarrassed the Home Office which provided the child and his aunt with a taxi home from the immigration centre near Heathrow airport.

A letter-writing campaign by classmates at Middle Row Primary School in North Kensington, West London, won a reprieve for Luc two hours before he was to be flown to Cameroon on Thursday.

Luc came to Britain five years ago when his aunt and guardian Marie Therese sought asylum. She has lost her appeal against being refused asylum on the ground of fearing political persecution.

The Home Office yesterday gave Luc and his aunt another two weeks permission to stay in Britain.



Sweets given an added fizz for today's electronic age

LOVE HEARTS have been given a flavour of new technology. Messages from an earlier era such as Wow, Fab and Groovy have been replaced with slogans for a generation weaned on computers and the Internet.

Be My Icon, Fax Me, Page Me and www.cupid can now be found on the fizzy sweets, as well as perennial favourites such as Be True and Kiss Me.

The rise and fall of youth cultures can be charted by the fizzy sweets, along with wider social changes. Trevor Matlow, managing director of Swizzels Matlow, said: "In the 1950s we produced Love Hearts that said things like Hey Daddio and in the 1960s we had Cool. We have to keep

up with the times so we have phased in these latest ones over the last few months. The Internet, e-mail and fax are all modern phenomena that have become part of modern vocabulary."

Love Hearts have not always been quite so abreast of the times. In the 1970s the slogan "Gay Boy" had to be removed after complaints. Mr Matlow, whose father Alfred founded the firm, said: "An American chap took exception and asked if I knew what it meant. I said yes, of course, it means a chap who is jolly and happy."

Love Hearts first appeared as novelty gifts in crackers at Christmas 1954. Geoff Nicholas, the company's marketing

director, said: "There are literally hundreds of different messages and we do try to update them from time to time."

"You can never know what trend is around the corner but I'm sure that we will be able to encapsulate it in a sweet."

A selection of the hundreds of messages in use at any one time are placed at random in each tube of Love Hearts. Mr Nicholas said: "No two tubes should be the same. Part of the fun of the product is that you never know what combination of message and the six flavours you will come across next."

One of messages at least will remain unchanged: I Love You.

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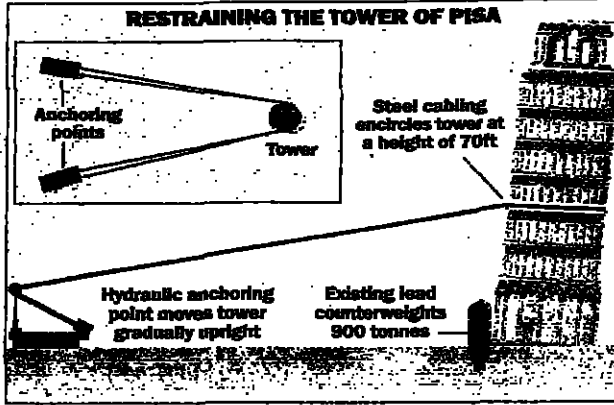
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Pisa's celebrated medieval masterpiece has been dubbed The Tower of Discord by the Italian press

Experts wrangle over best angle

CHRIS WARDE-JONES



Pierotti: "it's unquestionably a phallic symbol"

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN PISA

As preparatory work began this week on a controversial plan to haul the leaning Tower of Pisa back towards the upright with giant steel cables, art experts launched a campaign to halt the project on the ground that it will make the famous tilt even worse. Some say it could cause it to collapse altogether, sending 179ft of exquisitely carved Romanesque white

marble — which has stood for nearly seven centuries — crashing to the ground. The plan involves raising the tower — which leans about 15ft out of true — by half a degree, or 16in. The project was approved a month ago by the official committee for the protection of the Tower of Pisa, chaired by Professor Michele Jamiolkowski. The committee has been examining schemes

since 1990 and is keen to have a solution in place in time for the millennium.

Opponents are alarmed by the committee's decision to pull the tower back towards the vertical by encircling it with giant steel cables or braces. The cables, 336ft long and 4in thick, will be attached to the tower at a height of 72ft. The tower, which began to tilt dangerously after the last attempt to reverse its decline three years ago, is kept in place by 900 tonnes of lead weights piled against its base on the opposite side from the way it leans. If the steel cables prove successful, the committee's experts say, the lead weights could be removed next year, and soil will be removed from beneath the northern side in a series of "controlled landslides" to right the tower's base.

For the protesters, such as Professor James Beck of Columbia University and Professor Piero Pierotti of Pisa University, this is "irresponsible madness". An Internet site on the project has been inundated with protests and counter-proposals, and the ensuing row led the Italian press to dub the monument The Tower of Discord.

"The air of Pisa is full of poisonous accusations," said *La Repubblica*. Professor Beck, who holds the chair of art history at Columbia University in New York and heads ArtWatch International, which monitors art restoration projects, says that since 1990 £15 million had been spent on "temporary measures" which had "only succeeded in causing further damage".

He says the committee in charge of the tower had acted in haste because its mandate expired at the end of this year. It had, in any case, acted throughout its term in conditions of secrecy. "They do not consult the scientific community at large," Professor Beck says. "They have an authoritarian approach reminiscent of the Fascist era of Benito Mussolini."

Professor Pierotti, who has taught art history at Pisa for 40 years, agrees there is "no freedom of information". In his book *How Not To Save The Tower of Pisa (Una Torre Da Non Salvare)*, Professor Pierotti has examined the many schemes proposed over the past 150 years. The wackier proposals include attaching a helium balloon to the top of the tower, lopping off the top storey altogether, and relandscaping the surrounding meadow so that it

slopes in the same direction as the tower leans and so makes it appear upright, an optical illusion which would presumably give the millions of tourists who visit Pisa every year a crick in the neck.

The tower, which is the *campanile* or bell-tower of the adjoining cathedral, was begun in 1173 in the Field of Miracles (Campo dei Miracoli). The tower, the cathedral (begun in 1064) and the circular baptistry form a trio of medieval masterpieces.

But just beneath the turf of the meadow is saturated sandy soil and clay, and the tower first started to subside when only 30ft high. Undeterred, masons continued the work, and the tower was completed after a further 180 years, with the bell-tower placed on top in 1350. Galileo, who came from Pisa, used the overhang to drop metal balls to prove the theory of gravity.

The tower has been declining slowly to the south ever since. In a modern echo, it started to shift ominously in September 1995 when the ground around it was deliberately frozen and workers started to remove rock and earth from the base to build a concrete ring. Frantic efforts by engineers working through the night staved off collapse, and the lead weights were successfully installed on the northern side.

The tower has a hold on the world's imagination, Professor Pierotti says, because its proportions are mathematically perfect — its eight storeys are intended to recall the Tower of Babel — and it is a work of "soaring imagination and symbolic beauty". He notes that it is also "unquestionably a phallic symbol", an image that is emphasised by its angle. "Perhaps the attempt to pull it erect is another aspect of the age of Viagra."

Giorgio Croci, professor of engineering at Rome University and a member of the Tower of Pisa committee, says: "I am confident our plan will work."

Piero Fiorani, the Mayor of Pisa, says he had "no fears that the tower will fall... the committee is staffed by international experts whose credibility hangs on this plan." □ *Una Torre Da Non Salvare* by Piero Pierotti is published by Pacini Editore, Via Gherardesca, Ospedaletto, Pisa, at 38,000 lire.

The Internet site opened by campaigners against the Tower of Pisa project is www.torredipisa.com

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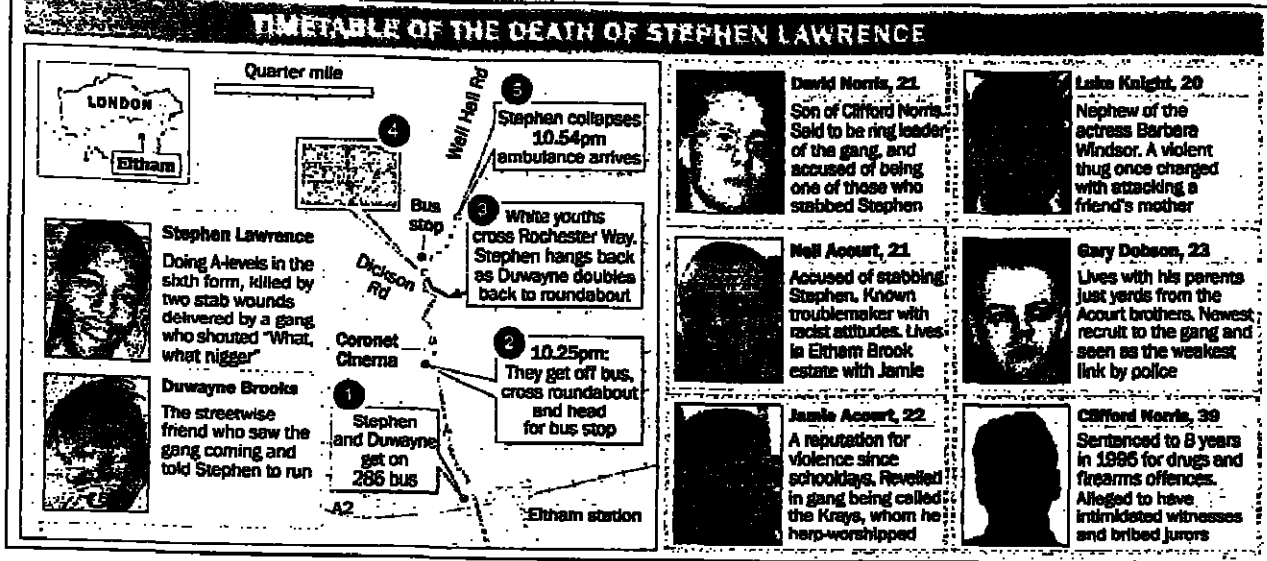
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THE STEPHEN LAWRENCE INQUIRY



From previous page investigation of Stephen's murder. Some supporters of the Lawrence family openly accused the police of not wanting to prosecute the five accused for fear it would reveal the extent of their corrupt links with the South London underworld.

Others believe detectives were just fearful their incompetence in gathering evidence meant they did not have a strong enough case against these five young men who, with their underworld connections, knew how to manipulate the legal system to their advantage.

During the inquiry, the Lawrence's barrister, Michael Mansfield, QC, openly accused Norris senior of corrupt behaviour and asked about his links with DS Coles and other Yard officers. He said it raised suspicions that the police failure in the Lawrence investigation could not be down to incompetence alone. "So much was missed by so many that deeper causes and forces must be considered."

He argues the Yard have yet to prove there were no corrupt links with underworld figures which affected this enquiry. Nor, he says, have they detailed the precise relationships Norris had with some of its officers in the Lawrence case.

Some of the officers involved in the initial flawed inquiry have since retired. Many work at a private security agency, Kroll Associates. They include former detective superintendent William Blakey, who is now director of risk management. His former colleague Ian Crampton, and Commander Raymond Adams, who ran Kenneth Noye as a police informer, are also there.

The Lawrence family believe that the four-month inquiry has succeeded in raising more questions than it has answered about the conduct of key police officers.

They said last night they are confident the final report will support their criticisms of how the police handled the racist murder of their son.

The unprecedented apology from the Metropolitan Police was they say not enough. They want to see officers disciplined for the way they conducted this inquiry. The inquiry now moves into its second phase, examining the way police handle crimes with a racial motive.

Neville and Doreen Lawrence insist though that they have not given up hope of bringing civil action against the five suspects for perjury.

They say this is their last chance to get some sort of justice for their son.



Norris's hideaway: Tipsey Oast House, Robertsbridge

The pub in Chislehurst where Norris met Sergeant Coles, and the house that he shares with his wife and son

Reality of race attacks 'is being ignored'

By DANIEL MCGRODY

SUKHDEV REEL has sat beside Stephen Lawrence's parents throughout the public inquiry, wondering why the police will not believe that her son was another victim of racist murderers.

Protest groups say that Ricky Reel's death was one of many incidents where police refuse to accept that race was a motive. Despite the hearings, says Lee Jasper, of the 1990 Trust, an organisation set up to combat racism, "police and the public still won't accept that racially motivated attacks are on the increase".

Home Office figures released this week show that the

number of racially motivated murders has doubled in eight years. Ricky Reel's death was not among the statistics.

The 20-year-old student had gone for a birthday celebration with friends last October. On their way to a club in Kingston-upon-Thames in southwest London, they were racially abused by a gang of white youths and attacked in front of witnesses.

Ricky was seen running away. A week later his body was washed up under Kingston bridge. Police decided he had been drunk, had fallen into the river and drowned.

Mrs Reel, of West Drayton,

has spent the past ten months demanding a new investigation into her son's death. She has the support of the Lawrence family. "My son was killed by racists just as Stephen was but Jack Straw ignores my pleas for a similar inquiry and the police investigation is getting nowhere. How can a boy who doesn't drink or take drugs fall and drown in four foot of water?"

There cannot be an inquest until Surrey Police completes an investigation into the Metropolitan Police's handling of the Reel case, ordered after the family contacted the Police Complaints Authority.

"Surely the lesson from the Lawrence inquiry is that police should listen to the victim's family," Mrs Reel said.

The Home Office says that nine people have died in racially motivated murders in the past three years and there have been five racially motivated attempted murders. There have been 866 serious assaults and 402 attacks involving arson and explosives. The police say there were 13,151 racial incidents in 1996-97. Home Office officials concede that this is "only the ones we know about and the real figure is much higher".

Peter Herbert, of the Society of Black Lawyers, said: "The figures are way too low. There is a fundamental unwillingness among most people to believe that society can be so perverse in its treatment of young black, Afro-Caribbean and Asian males."

Mr Jasper, director of the 1990 Trust, said: "Police still drag their feet on racist attacks. Too often their instinct is to claim it must be drug-related or a turf war."

Scotland Yard says that two murders in London in the past three years were racially motivated. Richard Everitt, 15, was stabbed in the back by an Asian youth near King's Cross in 1994. Manesh Patel, 15, was beaten to death by two white youths as he travelled home to Kenton, northwest London, last August.

Mr Jasper said: "We believe there are at least another ten."

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FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN TEHRAN

TWENTY years after Iran's Islamic Revolution plunged relations with London into disarray, Britain is spending £1.3 million on renovating its dilapidated but historic embassy in central Tehran.

Iran, straddling the oil and gas wealth of the Middle East and Central Asia, is coming in from the cold under Muhammad Khatami, its moderate new President. With Britain's competitors jostling for position across the region, London feels it can no longer afford to ignore the country. Local craftsmen have returned to its former glory the ambassador's residence where Winston Churchill celebrated his 69th birthday in November 1943 with Josef Stalin and Franklin Roosevelt. The Big Three decided in Tehran the date and magnitude of the Anglo-American invasion of Nazi-occupied France that was to be aided by a renewed Russian offensive.

"This is a building with a history, but it is also a building very much for the future. We have confidence that our relations with Iran will continue to improve," said Nick Browne, Britain's chargé d'affaires in Tehran.

Work is due to start early next year on the main office block, which has received little maintenance since it was built in 1963 and ransacked 15 years later in the unrest that preceded the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The British Legation, as the ambassador's residence was known, had fallen into structural disrepair over two decades. Its once ornate rooms, hung with portraits of



Stalin at the British Legation in 1943

Queen Victoria and a young Elizabeth II, were fly-blown and dusty.

The embassy's importance declined rapidly after the Revolution and it was shut down three times in the decade after the Shah's overthrow. Relations have been downgraded to charge level since 1989 when Ayatollah Khomeini imposed a fatwa urging Muslims to kill Salman Rushdie, Churchill Street, which flanked the sprawling embassy, was renamed after the IRA hunger striker, Bobby Sands. But President Khatami is determined to build bridges with the West, which is keen to encourage him as he struggles to advance his reform programme in the teeth of hardline opposition. John Shepherd, a deputy under-secretary of state, will be the most senior British official to visit Iran in the unrest that preceded the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The British Legation, as the ambassador's residence was known, had fallen into structural disrepair over two decades. Its once ornate rooms, hung with portraits of

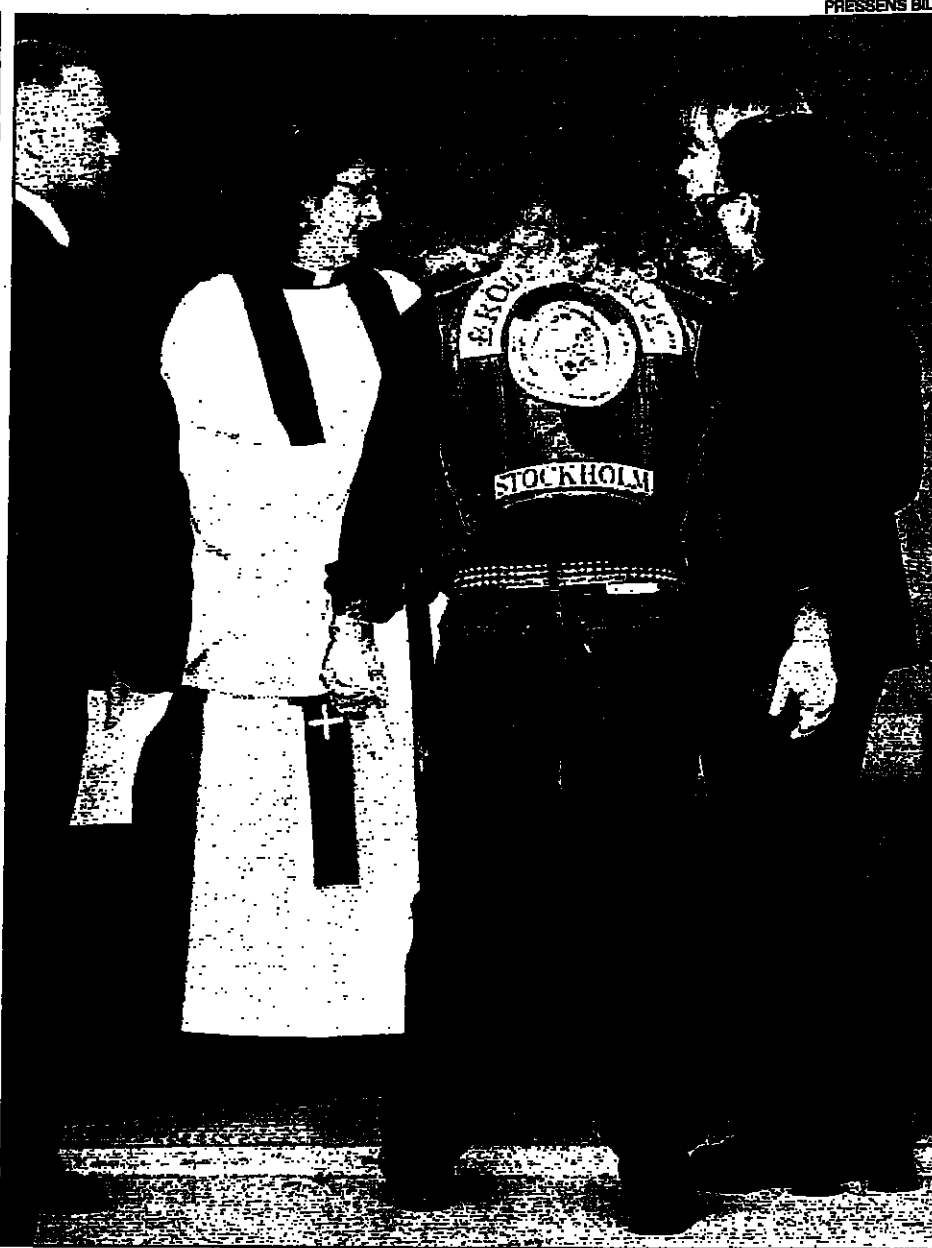
The ambassador's residence, which is to be used for receptions, is likely to be the envy of Britain's competitors.

its landscaped gardens, cooled by fountains and a lily pond, and shaded by pines and poplars, provide an oasis of green tranquillity at the heart of the dusty, teeming capital.

It was in these grounds that Churchill recovered from his gruelling work at the Tehran conference 55 years ago. The conference brought together for the first time the leaders of the three main Allied powers fighting Nazi Germany. It was Stalin's first visit outside the Soviet Union since he had come to power. Their main talks were held across the road at the Soviet Embassy.

But they also came together at the residence on November 30, when Churchill celebrated his birthday. The party was a rushed job and the logistics a nightmare. With no tradition of birthday candles in Iran, a cook had to dash around the capital to find 69 candles for Churchill's cake.

Churchill enjoyed himself immensely amid the toasts and cigar smoke. Stalin "was in the best of tempers and the President (Roosevelt), from his wheeled chair, beamed on us all in pleasure and goodwill", he wrote in his *The Second World War*.



Mourners in Stockholm thank the priest yesterday after the funeral of Daniel Fitzpatrick. The leader of a gang of petty criminals died after being shot 25 times

Danny the Hood leaves his stain on Scandinavia

By DOMINIC KENNEDY AND LENNART UTTERSTROM

THE funeral of Daniel Fitzpatrick, 45, a Briton who died in a hail of bullets after becoming the leader of one of Sweden's feuding criminal gangs, yesterday ended an ugly chapter in Scandinavian organised crime.

"Maybe it was the way he wanted to die, free and full of strength," Birgitta Winberg, a prison chaplain in Stockholm, told 30 mourners. "It is difficult to imagine Danny ageing and fading away." Alongside Fitzpatrick's children, Anneli and Kevin, the worshippers included Johan Carlsson, one of Sweden's most notorious criminals, who was granted compassionate leave from jail. Carlsson, jailed for robbing a coffee shop, leads the prison chapter of the Brotherhood, a gang of petty criminals founded by Fitzpatrick in 1995.

Once a rustproof, Fitzpatrick sank so low in the eyes of other villains that the police cannot decide who fired the shots that ended his reign of terror. Suspects include the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang, the Yugoslav underworld in Stockholm, and members of his own squabbling band.

Fitzpatrick called himself "President" of the *Brodraskapet* (Brotherhood), which he created while a prisoner in Kumba, one of Sweden's largest jails. His

bitterest rival is known as *Jadda* — the Pike. "They call him the Pike," said one observer of Swedish crime, "because he eats little fish." The Pike had joined the Hell's Angels with half of Fitzpatrick's 40 or so members. In Scandinavia, the Hell's Angels are a dangerous force. A spate of "biker wars" against their rivals, the Bandidos, has left 12 people dead and 40 in prison.

Fitzpatrick was born in Kenya to a British father and later lived near Hereford. He moved to Sweden when he was 19 and carried a British passport.

Detectives believe Fitzpatrick was behind the killing in February 1992 of a policeman. That year he was jailed for robbing a security van. The Brotherhood, whose symbol was a wolf, dealt in drugs and weapons and ran protection rackets.

Fitzpatrick — known as "Danny the Hood" — was freed from prison in January this year, after serving six years of his eight-year sentence. His fate was possibly sealed on February 4, when Sweden's most feared criminal, Dragan Joksovic, a Yugoslav, was shot dead.

On June 18, as Fitzpatrick was driving in Stockholm, another car drove up beside him. He was shot 25 times with an automatic weapon.

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Churchill admires his cake at the British Legation birthday party in November 1943. A cook had great difficulty in finding 69 birthday candles in Tehran

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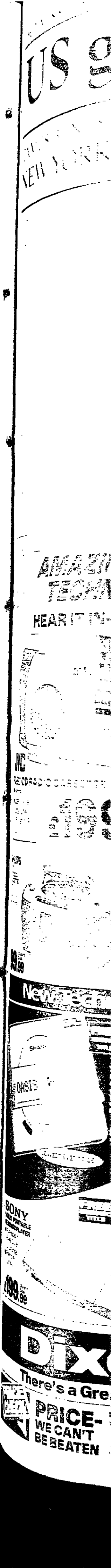
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US gets hip to Carnaby cult

JAMES BONE'S NEW YORK



AMERICANS are grooving to a new trend that spoofs Britain's swinging secret agents of the Sixties. A year after its American release, *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* is rapidly overtaking *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in cult status among style-setters.

The film, starring the American comedian Mike Myers as a tongue-in-cheek James Bond who is cryogenically frozen in 1967 and then defrosted three decades later to fight his nemesis Dr Evil, has become the midnight movie of choice for the smart set, and spawned a retro fashion for men's ruffle shirts and PVC miniskirts for women. To the amazement of many expatriates, it has also established the word "shag" in the American lexicon, albeit in such mutant compounds as "shag-adeic" and "shag-errific".

When released in Britain, *Austin Powers* proved a box-office disappointment, despite the presence of the leggy Elizabeth Hurley as a high-kicking blend of Emma Peel from *The Avengers* and Bond's Pussy Galore. But in America the \$9 million (£5.6 million) picture has earned more than

\$55 million and sold more than a million home videos. New Line Cinema, which made the film, is tapping into its word-of-mouth success by organising a "Shagadelic Summer" programme of midnight screenings in 30 cities (Slogan: "If you haven't seen Austin Powers at midnight, you haven't seen Austin Powers"). The studio is planning a sequel — or possibly a prequel, with Powers before he was frozen — as well as an animated series for teens.

An amazing variety of Austin Powers products are also beginning to hit the shops, ranging from a doll-size Mike Myers in a blue velvet suit, to "groovy" or "fab" T-shirts. One company will even market a trademark "Swedish penis pump" like the one that is a running joke throughout the film.

With Carnaby Street-like boutiques sprouting up in modish corners of downtown New York (many owned by Britons), Americans are obviously ready for a hefty dose of the Swinging Sixties. When one venue that used to stage *The Rocky Horror Show* threw a fancy-dress party recently, most of the crowd turned up



Bond-style agent Powers find himself in a tight spot

not in Gothic black but in the multi-coloured splendour of Austin Powers's costumes. Among the first to recognise the film's fashion potential was Rory Fleming, a relative of Jan Fleming, the creator of James Bond. Rory threw a lavish Austin Powers party in John Gotti's former house on the exquisite Shelter Island, a favourite summer haunt of transplanted Britons, and only about 20 of the 250 guests did not come suitably attired. The event was duly written up in the style magazines.

"I came face-to-face with the Austin Powers phenomenon myself last week when invited to a similar fancy-dress party at the spectacular NoHo penthouse of British-trained architect Jonathan Leitersdorf. The triplex apartment, which boasts a rooftop swimming pool with skyline views, bristled with Liz Hurley lookalikes in miniskirts and thigh boots and would-be superspies in hipsters. Our host exercised his prerogative to dress up as the bald Dr Evil — an obvious pastiche of Bond's Dr No.

"We were, like, four or five very good friends who just loved the movie and we were constantly using phrases from it in real life." Jonathan explained. "On the other side were the aesthetes: the Sixties. It's a flashy, colourful era, and they brought it across really well with his car and things. We said, 'Let's throw a party'. It caught on like wildfire. Everyone who we told Austin Powers said 'Wow! What a great idea.' It was an excuse to go shopping."



The Austin Powers cult has spawned a retro fashion for men's ruffle shirts



Maples: rough cut

Showtime in court

Marla Maples is returning to her roots with a new hairdo just in time for her divorce from Donald Trump, the property mogul.

The former chorus-line girl is known to the world as an attractive blonde, but she turned up in court the other day as a closely cropped brunette.

"It's still show-girl hair," her Italian stylist opines. "It's just a little bit tougher." Marla-watchers believe she is projecting a serious image for the court in the hope of a bigger settlement.

Most Americans would have no idea what you meant if you yelled: "Allez les Bleus!" But one corner of trendy SoHo boasts so many French bistros that it has become known as Petit Paris, and the combination of a World Cup victory and Bastille Day had its French inhabitants in permanent celebration last week. According to a French friend who has lived in New York for years, the festivities proved that his countrymen had lost their capacity to "party". (Perhaps a side-effect of that long-running malaise known over there as "La Grogne".)

There were enough signs of life to bring out the riot police on Sunday as fans streamed out of a local French café with a big TV set. But the cops found themselves reduced to little more than crowd control, with a handful of French fans waving silly little tricolours as the boisterous Brazilians supplied a Latin beat. The French redeemed themselves somewhat on *Quatorze Juillet* by closing a street and organising a tournament of pétanque or boules — with free champagne, *bien sur*.

Pooh hoo-ha has happy ending

THE custody battle over Winnie the Pooh and his cohorts, now held at the New York Public Library, has ended with a gesture of transatlantic détente. After a British MP called for Pooh to be freed to return to his native land, forcing the issue on the agen-

da of President Clinton and Tony Blair themselves, New York offered a fig-leaf to Britain in the form of a cultural exchange. The Mayor promised to pay for one American and one British child to make trips to the other side of the pond based

on the results of an essay contest. The only caveat: the essay must explain to Pooh why New York is such a great place to live. The American winner began her trip this week. Catarianna Hepburn from Scotland will travel to New York next month.



Pooh: on top agendas

Bad case of Gallo humour



Gallo: film trashed

RENAISSANCE man Vincent Gallo, an actor-painter-musician and former Calvin Klein model, is having a tough time coping with criticism of his debut as a film-maker. Gallo became an *auteur* with *Buffalo 66*, about a young ex-prisoner who kidnaps a woman from a tap-dancing studio and forces her to pretend to be his wife to impress his parents.

Gallo, who wrote and directed the film as well as starring, evidently believes it is a work of undiluted genius. Although he howled with protest when he failed to win the coveted prize at the Sundance Film Festival, the critics' reaction has been mixed.

The nay-sayers had better beware. Gallo is in the habit of calling up negative reviewers to give them a piece of his mind. When Thelma Adams of the *New York Post* called the film "amateur", Gallo made a nuisance call to tell her: "You are so ugly." When Jack Mathews of *Newsday* gave the film only one star, Gallo called to accuse him of loving *Titanic*.

Even the *Village Voice's* terminally hip gossip columnist Michael Musto was on the receiving end. "Hey Mrs Musto, you're a real a-hole," he told Musto's telephone answering machine. To which the extravagantly gay writer responded: "It's Ms."

Quick exchange overheard in a local boutique in SoHo. Salesman Ladies, if there's anything you need, I'm Nick. Customer: And if we don't need anything, who are you then?

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Mugabe's Grace and favours



Robert Mugabe and his bride at their 1996 wedding

Jan Raath reports from Chivhu on the cynicism of Zimbabwe's ruling elite as they feather their nests in a country suffering from desperate and worsening poverty



Grace Mugabe's expensive but badly built house under construction at Chivhu, a small, overcrowded village

Despite its £104,000 cost, the house that Grace built has been badly built. There is scarcely a flat plane or a straight line in any of the 24 rooms. The second storey was clearly an afterthought.

Its size rivals even the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes near by, and certainly it far outshines the small rundown homes that house the people of the overcrowded village of Chivhu 80 miles south of Harare.

It is the second mansion that Grace Mugabe, the President's 33-year-old second wife, has built for herself since her lavish wedding two years ago. The first, with 30 rooms in Harare's mink-and-manure

belt, was made possible by a £244,000 loan from a housing fund meant for middle-ranking civil servants. The High Court ruled that the loan was illegal.

The statement of affluence rearing out of the burnt scrub around Chivhu is a jaw-dropping piece of cynicism by the wife of Zimbabwe's head of state. The country's citizens are desperate over the poverty brought on them by economic crisis, but there is no sign that Mr Mugabe has any intention of attending to it.

Mrs Mugabe is a minor figure. The corruption in the 74-year-old President's court of relatives and cronies has swollen in the past five years and compares with the institution-

al kleptocracy of Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko.

"There is no one-off bribe," said Welshman Ncube, a prominent civic lawyer. "They want to be part of the whole show. They want to make millions out of this, and the country can go to hell. There is no longer any shame."

After a relatively slow start from independence in 1980, the Nigerian model has been adopted with alacrity: senior politicians take control of state contracts and licensing, violate all procedures and pass on the rights to politically well-connected businessmen.

The small clan of cronies is mostly from Mr Mugabe's district of Zvimba, 45 miles west of Harare, and holds regular

get-togethers at the President's 43-room mansion there. The cronies deal in briefcases of cash and drive tank-like Japanese Pajeros.

In 1994 Strive Masiyiwa, the Scots-educated head of Econet Wireless, said he rejected a demand from two crony heavyweights for a £244,000 payoff and a dominant share in the company in return for the immediate licensing of the country's first mobile phone network.

There followed a four-year court battle against a wall of intrigue and obstruction built to block him. His refusal to be cowed has turned him into a folk hero and he was able to

switch on his network on Friday last week.

But a day earlier Chen Chimutengwende, the Information Minister, was pictured in a daily newspaper grinning as he spoke into a mobile phone given to him at the launch of the Telecel network.

In January, the Supreme Court revoked Telecel's operating licence on the ground that it had been issued irregularly. In March, Mr Chimutengwende defied the court and returned the licence to the company without its fulfilling a single step in the procedures that Mr Masiyiwa had had to grind through.

The names of the Zvimba

clan appear again and again on contract documents and company boards. Leo Mugabe, the President's nephew, was appointed in 1996 to the board of the privately owned Zimbabwe Express Airlines which had been struggling for nine months for operating rights. Within three days the documentation was complete.

Small beer. Last month workers began preliminary work on a £73 million new airport terminal. The contract was secured by Leo Mugabe with a Cypriot company named Hazy Investments. The state tender board's decision to give it to an internationally known French contractor bidding much lower was reversed by the Cabinet.

Heart attack victim sues Viagra firm for \$80m

FROM JAMES DONE IN NEW YORK

A RETIRED New Yorker who suffered a heart attack after taking four Viagra pills in five days has become the first customer to file a suit against Pfizer, the maker of the "love drug". "Viagra changed my life, but not favourably," said Diego Padro, 63, a former photo-lab owner who has been married for 33 years. "No one needs to improve their sex life to die for it."

Mr Padro is seeking \$80 million (£49 million) in damages from Pfizer

for marketing what he called an "unreasonably dangerous product", and his wife is asking for a further \$5 million for "deprivation of services".

Given a free sample bottle of 15 pills by his doctor, Mr Padro started taking the drug almost daily on May 21 to correct diabetes-related impotence, and suffered a heart attack on May 26.

His family has no history of heart disease, and he claims he took a cardiogram and a treadmill stress test several months before taking the popular blue tablets.

Although Viagra has already trig-

gered lawsuits by women deserted by their newly engaged husbands or lovers, and claims by men against their doctors, Mr Padro's case is the first time that the drug-making company itself has been sued.

Pfizer reiterated that the drug had been thoroughly tested, and that diabetics had been included in the trials.

Of the two million men who have taken Viagra for "erectile dysfunction" since it went on sale in America in April, about 30 deaths have been reported, including at least four who

were diabetic. Pfizer calls the drug a "safe and effective medicine" and says there is no proof that it was the cause of death.

Manila: Viagra-laced cocktails are the latest craze at bars in a nightclub district near a former American air base in the Philippines. The drinks, including the "pecker upper", "the woodies" and "get it up" are even advertised on the Internet by at least four bars in northern Angeles City, the Philippine Daily Inquirer reported yesterday. The Government is still testing the drug. (AFP)



WORLD IN BRIEF

EU call to halt child sex abuse on Net

Brussels: The discovery of thousands of images of child pornography in The Netherlands led Austria — the holder of the European Union presidency — to call yesterday for urgent action on paedophile communications on the Internet (Charles Bremner writes). "The most recent uncovering in The Netherlands of especially disgusting cases of child abuse prove once more how urgent it is to take joint and firm action on a European level," Wolfgang Schüssel, the Foreign Minister, said.

The Dutch case involves a group which held 90,000 pictures on disk of children being sexually abused.

Last bid for war crime pact

Rome: Diplomats were last night locked in a final round of talks in an attempt to persuade the United States to accept a draft text establishing a permanent International Criminal Court to try war criminals (Richard Owen writes). The text appeared to have the approval of most of the 160 nations attending. At the request of the non-aligned nations, UN negotiators added "aggression" to the list of war crimes, but not the use of nuclear weapons, as demanded by India.

Rabin widow in arms row

Jerusalem: The widow of Yitzhak Rabin, the assassinated Labour Prime Minister, accused aides of the Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, of "blood libel" over Israel's arms-to-Iran scandal (Christopher Walker writes). Leah Rabin made her accusation after reported claims by Mr Netanyahu that Mr Rabin had blocked any attempt to arrest Nahum Manbar, now jailed for selling poison gas materials to Tehran.

Singapore penalty raised

Singapore: The Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal by the veteran Opposition leader, Jostua Jeyaretnam, right, in a defamation case and increased the damages he must pay Goh Chok Tong, the Singapore Prime Minister, fivefold to \$100,000 (£36,000). The leader of the Workers' Party must also pay costs, which his lawyer had estimated could be as much as \$52 million (£720,000). In finding for Mr Goh, three judges, including the Chief Justice, said that the trial judge had erred. (Reuters)



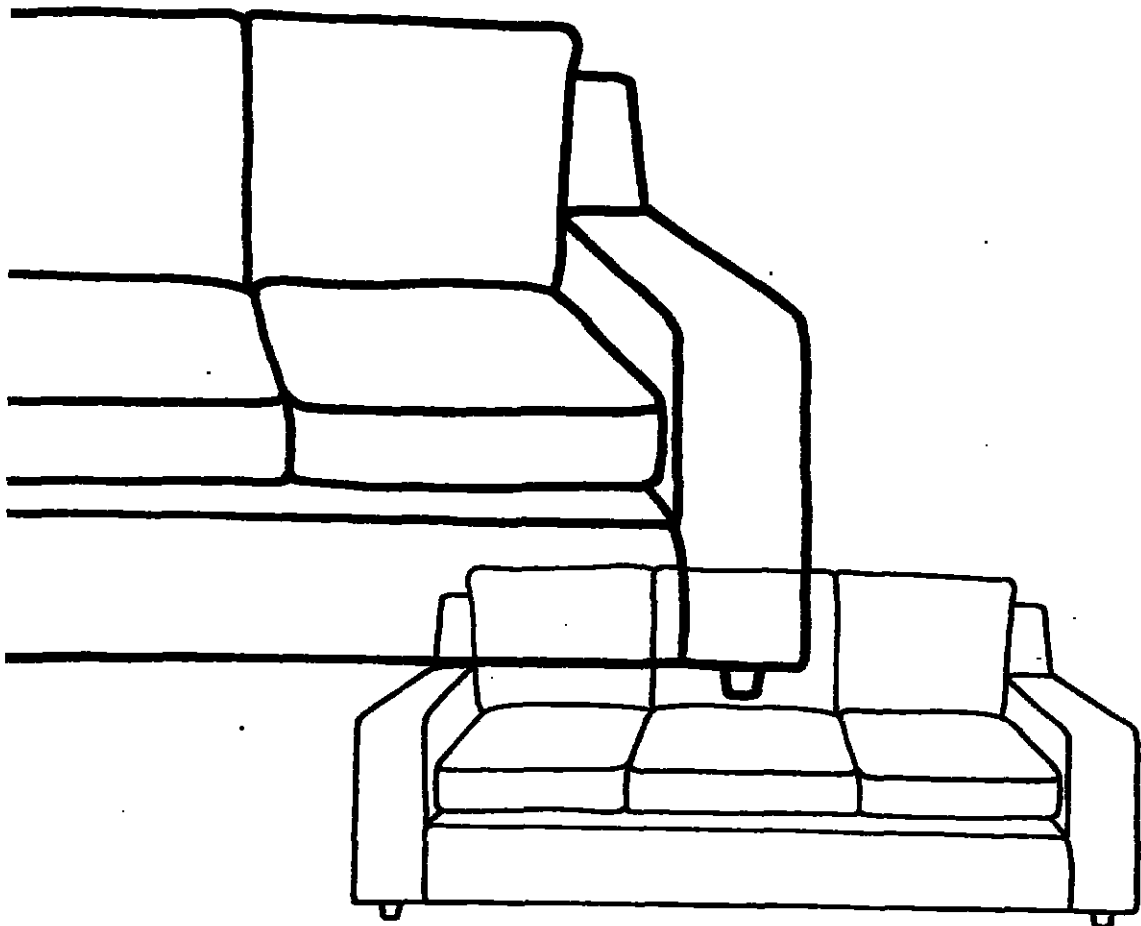
Ex-ministers for Aids trial

Paris: Three former French ministers have been sent for trial charged with manslaughter in connection with Aids-tainted blood transfusions. Laurent Fabius, a former Prime Minister and now National Assembly Speaker, Edmond Hervé and Georgina Dufloix were in government when about 1,250 haemophiliacs were infected by state-supplied blood products in 1985. More than 400 have died. (Reuters)

Spain's royal grandchild

Madrid: King Juan Carlos of Spain became a grandfather for the first time yesterday when his eldest daughter, the Infanta Elena, gave birth to a baby boy who automatically becomes third in line to the crown (Giles Tremlett writes). He was named after his uncle, Prince Felipe, heir to the Spanish crown, and his grandfather. His full name is Felipe Juan Froilán de Todos Los Santos de Marichalar Borbón.

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Blair attacks SNP separatism

Labour's slump in Scots poll prompts fighting talk, says Gillian Harris

TONY BLAIR attempted to make up lost ground for Labour in Scotland yesterday by fiercely attacking the Scottish National Party.

Addressing newly-selected Labour candidates for the Scottish parliament, in Edinburgh, the Prime Minister denounced the Nationalists as aiming to wrench Scotland out of the United Kingdom. "I'll tell you what SNP really stands for — Separatism: No Policies," Mr Blair said.

He warned Scottish voters that in next May's elections to the parliament they faced "a choice of two futures. The first is based on a new relationship between Scotland and Britain. It is a future based on prosperity, a better NHS, more jobs, good schools."

"The second is the one offered by the separatists. The Scottish economy put at risk. Taxes up to pay for the costs of separation. Schools and hospitals without the funding they need. Businesses scared of investing because they can't get answers on currency, on interest rates, on taxes. It is a future of uncertainty."

In recent months Labour's standing in the opinion polls has slumped, while the SNP is enjoying remarkable success. The latest poll shows that the nationalists have a lead of 14 points over Labour.

Since the general election, the Labour Party in Scotland has been dealt some damaging blows. There have been allegations of sleaze



The Prime Minister and Mrs Blair in Edinburgh yesterday, where he addressed Labour candidates for the Scottish parliament

against two MPs: revelations of financial irregularities at Labour-controlled councils; and the suggestion that the party leadership has made an ideological cull of old Labour candidates who wanted to stand for the Holyrood parliament.

Yesterday Mr Blair sought to bolster his party's confidence by outlining the Government's reform programme and election promises

that had been kept. "The Scottish parliament will not be a talking shop," he said. "It will have real power to make a difference to people's lives. It will be responsible for the education system, the health service and for law and order on the streets. It will have a direct impact on jobs and the quality of life."

"The SNP does not want to talk about this," the Prime Minister

said. "It behaves as though it is a commentator on the political scene. It is not. It is a party seeking power but hoping that no one will ever ask it what it will do about schools, about hospitals, about crime on our streets. The one policy that defines them — separatism — is the policy that it does not really like to talk about too much."

But Mr Blair was roundly con-

demned by his political opponents. Alex Salmond, the leader of the SNP, dismissed Mr Blair's visit as an "away-day to Scotland" that was "only happening because of new Labour's panic at the rise of the SNP. A flying visit by the leader of London Labour shows that they are out of touch with Scotland."

Leading article, page 19

Why Basildon man is a foreign concept

TONY BLAIR has an unfortunate habit of being wrong-footed when he comes to Scotland. Last time it was when he compared the powers of a Scottish parliament to those of an English parish council — not a popular analogy for red-blooded Scots. This time it was all about Middle Scotland.

For a politician from south of the border, it must be a baffling issue. Everyone knows what Middle England is — it's the part you appeal to when you want to win votes. It follows that there must be a similar place called Middle Scotland with the same aspirations, the same antipathy to higher taxes, the same set of good, solid, middle-class values.

Thus it was that Mr Blair, in the course of an interview with Nicky Campbell on Radio Five Live, unwittingly sparked off a controversy when he remarked that "there's a Middle Scotland as well as a Middle England".

has turned against what he saw as the selfishness of Thatcherism and refused to be wooed by Majorism. He has stuck with Labour, even when it said it would raise his taxes. He voted for Tony Blair last year because he presumed that he was voting for a more egalitarian society, one that took health and education and social services seriously. He believes he has been seriously let down.

The Scottish middle-class thinks of itself as egalitarian. It regards itself as more Scottish than British. In Bearsden, middle and working-class rub shoulders in the pub, laugh at Rab C. Nesbitt, and happily wear ginger wigs together on the terraces. "We're all Jock Tamson's bairns" is an old Scots saying. It is this sense of Scottishness that has translated into a 14 per cent lead in the polls for the Scottish National Party.

Blairism has not thus far won the hearts of the Scots, whatever their class. That does not mean that come next year's Scottish elections, they intend to vote blindly for independence. They are every bit as keen on sensible policies as any other electorate. But they cannot be taken for granted. And they will not warm to being told by a visiting Prime Minister that they are exactly like their English counterparts. Even if he was educated at Fettes.

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Lawyers who lose legal aid cases face blacklist

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

BARRISTERS whose over-optimistic predictions lead to people being granted legal aid in unsuccessful cases would be blacklisted under plans published by the Bar Council yesterday.

The proposal is one of several moves aimed at tightening up on legal aid and making it harder to get. In some cases, such as boundary disputes, it would not be available.

But the Bar Council, in its proposals to the Lord Chancellor, attacks his suggestion that a case should have at least a 75 per cent chance of success to merit legal aid. Many cases that deserve legal aid would be excluded under such a strict test, the Bar says.

Dan Brennan, QC, the Bar vice-chairman, said: "We have argued for many years that there are too many cases with insufficient merit being granted legal aid, but the Lord Chancellor's rigid approach will result in many good cases not proceeding."

Instead, the Bar calls for tighter controls and more rigorous enforcement of the current merits test, used when legal aid is granted. The Legal Aid Board should keep a record of predictions made by barristers and solicitors — who are asked for opinions before legal aid is granted — and the results of the cases, it says. "Those who are persis-

tently over-optimistic could face removal from the legal aid standards list."

It also wants regular case reviews to ensure that when circumstances of a case change, legal aid funding is reviewed and does not continue automatically for the life span of a case.

Mr Brennan pointed to the case of Sally Murphy, whose daughter Danielle was brain-damaged at birth. "Medical experts were sharply divided and this case could never have been brought to trial if it had had to pass a 75 per cent merit test. Mrs Murphy could never have funded the case herself and would have faced a life of struggling with the costs of caring for a brain-damaged child."

Yesterday Mrs Murphy said she had been told only the day before that the final damages settlement for her daughter, now 14, was £2 million. "I was absolutely speechless," she said.

Mrs Murphy, who lives in Caerphilly, said without legal aid she would never have contemplated the lengthy case. "I could never have afforded it. It has taken years and years of investigations."

But now, she said, with the £2 million award, she had peace of mind. "It means that when I am no longer around, there will be enough money to provide care for Danielle."

Danielle and Sally Murphy: won £2 million damages

Farm grants badly managed, say MPs

THE government agency responsible for administering the payment of European Union farm subsidies has been condemned by a Commons spending watchdog for mishandling its accounts (Michael Hornsby writes).

A report on the Intervention Board by the all-party Public Accounts Committee, published today, says the agency's "standard of financial management stands in urgent need of considerable improvement".

The board was unable to explain satisfactorily transactions amounting to £30 million. It also introduced a computerised accounting system without proper preparation and was slow in recovering £19 million due in reimbursements from the European Commission, according to the MPs.

"The committee is astonished that the board could even contemplate introducing a major new accounting system without providing proper desk instructions and without ensuring that its staff were properly trained," they say.

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VALERIE GROVE VISITS A SCHOOL THAT FAILED THE OFSTED TEST



Inspectors have "failed" St Faith's because it does not push its brightest pupils hard enough

Hard lesson on standards

If you were looking for a primary school for your child, St Faith's in Winchester is probably the kind you would choose. It is a small voluntary-aided Church of England school, housed in a well-kept Victorian building in a leafy road. At 3.30pm each day, the 120 children, smartly dressed in green and grey, with reading books in transparent envelopes, scamper across the yard to their waiting parents.

Peter Coles, Hampshire's director of education, puts the Ofsted case succinctly. If the Government declares that poverty is no excuse for under-achievement, by the same token it also believes that in catchment areas of professional families — with educated parents and highly motivated children — the level of achievement should be not merely satisfactory, but brilliant. "One has to apply 'value-added' conceptually as well as statistically. A school in which all the pupils are well-behaved and

of high calibre. Peter Coles, Hampshire's director of education, puts the Ofsted case succinctly. If the Government declares that poverty is no excuse for under-achievement, by the same token it also believes that in catchment areas of professional families — with educated parents and highly motivated children — the level of achievement should be not merely satisfactory, but brilliant. "One has to apply 'value-added' conceptually as well as statistically. A school in which all the pupils are well-behaved and



Parents Liz Sandes and Alison Galvin, behind; and front row from left, Caroline Tibbits, Clare Poole and Gill Cawse, with their children. They are incensed over the damning Ofsted report

support, and to the "project management and leadership" of the head, John Preston. Last year, too, a former governor bequeathed a playing field to the school, just across the road. "Worth a fortune," Ms Galvin says, "in this part of Winchester."

"All I can say is you normally have to pay for a school this good," Liz Sandes, mother of Robert, Charlotte and Camilla, said. "They probably think we're too middle-class. Because there are so many bright children, they say we aren't doing well enough. And the only word at their disposal is 'failing', so St Faith's becomes a 'failing' school, which is quite absurd."

destined for St Faith's. Her elder children, Guy and Rose, also went to the school. "You can tell as soon as you go into a school whether its discipline is good, its atmosphere warm. We've been happy with everything — sport, music, drama — but it's not just about academic achievements: our children benefit from the spiritual and moral values of the school, which shine out."



Lindley: inspectors not unfair

have delightful manners, that makes everyone feel nice and comfortable when they visit it, is not what education is about. We are there to educate. These youngsters are achieving well, but that is not good enough.

Ofsted published a national comparison of inspectors' judgments and test results this week, claiming a "broad match" between the two. But the report cast doubt on the accuracy of test scores because of alleged inconsistencies in their administration, and emphasised that inspectors took a "wider view of attainment" than that provided by the tests.

Morsels of wit in a dish that survives reheating

There is every reason why Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company, which is famous for its productions of Shepard's True West and Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath, should sometimes tackle less rough stuff. A bit of a laugh is good for heart, lungs and several other parts of the actor's anatomy. Why, then, did I find the revival of Kaufman and Hart's The Man Who Came To Dinner more sporadically enjoyable than expected?

THEATRE The Man Who Came To Dinner Barbican

damaging a hip. He proceeds to commandeer the wretched man's drawing room, his servants, even his children, whose rebellious instincts he encourages. He also imports friends, a maniac with a zoo he calls Cockerhatch City, and a crate full of penguins. And he is very, very rude — as the critic Alexander Woolcott, on whom he was based, was said to be very, very rude.

Opera & Ballet listings including Coliseum, Royal Ballet, and various theatre companies.

Theatre listings including Adelphi, Apollo Victoria, Comedy, and various other venues.

Theatre listings including Apollo Victoria, Comedy, and various other venues.

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Large advertisement for The Dave Brubeck Quartet 40th Anniversary UK Tour, featuring dates and venues.

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Advertisement for 'The Misanthrope' at the Prince Edward Theatre.

Advertisement for 'The Misanthrope' at the Prince Edward Theatre.

Advertisement for 'The Misanthrope' at the Prince Edward Theatre.

A man who got away with murder

James Pringle recalls the photo that defined Vietnam's cruelty

The picture captured the horror and brutality of the Vietnam War. Just as the American people were turning against that conflict, an Associated Press photographer took a picture of General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, a Saigon police chief, stretching out a sinewy arm clutching a snub-nosed revolver and executing a member of the Vietcong. This powerful image of a man dead on his feet became the one that summed up the war for millions.

Even then, as the Vietcong mounted the Tet offensive, the general, chief of the "white rice", South Vietnam's national police, was accused of barbarity. Nowadays he might have been a candidate for the UN War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Yet in the context of the time his action was more comprehensible.

Loan, who died this week in exile in America, aged 67, had just learnt of the cold-blooded murders by the VC. South Vietnam's indigenous Communist guerrillas, of the families of some of his officers.

I was bureau chief of Reuters in Vietnam at the time, but I was not present when Loan found himself on the world's front pages. I was caught in crossing between the VC and Saigon troops with my Vietnamese assistant, Phan Ngoc Dinh. As we lay sprawled in the road, Dinh asked me to look after his wife and children if he was hit, but to see that his sons "when they grow big not be journalists" — a reasonable enough request in the circumstances.

A painful image of a man dead on his feet

Like other reporters, I saw a lot of Loan. He would turn up during bouts of trouble with a large ice-filled bucket of Saigon's Biere 33 in his Jeep. He was a slightly scary, straight-talking, flamboyant figure who had no love for the press. During Tet, when his "white mice", named for their white uniforms, refused to enter a building occupied by Vietcong snipers, I saw him pull out that same pistol and charge in at their head.

The mood of the war had been ugly for months. In late 1967, 500 GIs were dying every week. There was a murderous mood among Americans and Communist fighters. I saw US Marines clear villages where guerrillas might seek shelter. We had driven only a few hundred yards, in a big military lorry full of Vietnamese civilians, when American planes swept in and napalmed the houses. As they saw their homes and family graves incinerated, the Vietnamese began to wall. The American machinegunner sitting above me said to the driver: "They could have waited till we were out of sight." The driver shrugged: "What does it matter — they are only goats."

I reported the sickening sight of the napalming but not the GIs' words, which seemed too cruel to be true, but they reflected the mentality that later produced the My Lai massacre.

Even-handed reporting was not popular with the US command. When I asked a pointed question at the Five O'Clock Follies, the daily war briefing, an American colonel asked me why I didn't "go join my friends in Peking".

Sometimes the public was denied a true picture. An Australian reporter saw Americans throw two Vietcong prisoners to their deaths from a helicopter at 3,000ft to make a third talk. When he reported this, his editor told him he did not want it — he wanted nice hometown yarns about Aussie boys.

What could a War Crimes Tribunal have done about Vietnam? Who would be held responsible for the napalming of villages, the B52 strikes, the terrorism and the secret bombing of Cambodia? Would not Robert McNamara, who now says "we were wrong, terribly wrong", and Henry Kissinger, have to have appeared in the dock alongside Loan, and General Vo Nguyen Giap, the North Vietnamese commander who expended the lives of his troops with Earl Haig-like indifference.

After some time, I relieved John MacLennan, a South African who had been risking his life covering the battles of Hue. The other three Reuters reporters in Vietnam, Bruce Pigott, Ron Laramy and Rick Paris, were in other war zones. The fighting in Hue was all but over, but the bodies of 2,500 "reactionaries" executed by the Communists were being unearthed. No one ever answered for these crimes.

In April 1968 I returned to Britain to prepare for a posting in Havana. Vietnam was fuelling protests outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square and battles with the CRS in Paris.

Two weeks later, the Vietcong launched their second wave offensive in Saigon. Pigott and Laramy were killed with two other reporters at a Saigon roadblock. Two of the five Reuters correspondents who covered the start of Tet were dead.

Dinh risked his life to go in to see if anyone was alive and saw the reporters' bodies. He had to fight back tears: the VC would have killed him if they had seen them. Dinh's sons grew up in Australia and did not become journalists, although a daughter did.

Loan was wounded in the same May offensive. The life of the man who so disliked journalists was saved by a powerfully built Australian correspondent, Pat Burgess, who carried him to safety under fire. Loan died in his bed in a suburb of Washington last Tuesday. His legacy is a picture that will for ever define the cruelty and folly of the Vietnam War.

NATURE NOTES

Brown Bear (*Ursus profligatus*)

While apparently prudent and cautious, it reveals its true colours when getting its paws on the honey pot. Red in tooth and claw.



Fig. 1 Coming to a sticky end



Usual dour expression alters significantly

Ben Brooks

The last pretenders?

DNA tests have exposed many a fraud but has the romance of history been lost for ever, asks Ben Macintyre

Ducker & Son of the Turf in Oxford, shoemakers to well-heeled dons and crowned heads of Europe for generations, were rumoured to have kept the Romanov account open ever since 1917, just in case a member of Russia's Imperial Family had survived the massacre at Yekaterinburg and turned up to settle the unpaid bill.

Mr Ducker might as well close the account now. British and American scientists have compared microscopic particles of the Duke of Edinburgh, among others of royal blood, with genetic material from the remains laid to rest yesterday and declared a chromosomal match. Just about everyone, except the Russian Orthodox Church, now accepts that the bones buried in St Petersburg are those of the Romanovs.

The bill at Ducker's is not going to be paid, and that wonderful parade of folk claiming to be Romanov (including the remarkable Anna Anderson, who insisted she was the Grand Duchess Anastasia but was posthumously exposed by DNA testing to be a Polish peasant named Franziska Schanzkowska) may be coming to an end. The future is unlikely to hold many more such "pretenders", for DNA testing, with its 99 per cent claim to accuracy, has effectively wiped out the species. That is a victory for hard science, but a deadening one for the myth, romance and texture of history.

DNA testing has provided the tools to locate the genetic position in the human race of every individual, alive or dead, with a bare minimum of physical evidence. It has proved a massive boon to lawyers, police, abandoned mothers and children. In Argentina genetic tracing has enabled orphans left by the former dictatorship's death squads to be reunited with the remaining members of their families. The technology may eventually trace the path of evolution and map the movement of language and race.

But the precision of the DNA swab is simultaneously killing off a picturesque branch of history: the impostors, the rogues, the claimants, the men and women who mysteriously vanished and then reappeared, are being put through the lab and pronounced true or, in most instances, false. From Pèrre Lachaise to the jungles of South America, dead actors and Nazis are being dug up to establish dead certainties.

This is reassuring for scientists, and those who think history should be a collection of known facts with footnotes, but it is also steadily expunging one of the central pleasures of the past, the mystery of identity. In some cases this is a relief, such as the scientific proof that Martin Bormann and Josef Mengele, those horribly enduring Nazi leg-ends, are dead. The unknown soldier from the Vietnam War entombed in Arlington National Cemetery turns out to be Lieutenant Michael Blassie, shot down northwest of Saigon 26 years ago. There will never again be unknown wartime dead.

But in other respects the historical advantage of DNA testing is more dubious. Scientists will soon tell us whether Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, had an affair with a black slave girl, by testing those who claim to be his black "heirs". If the findings confirm the black Jefferson line, America's third President will be painted as hypocrite and a lecher; if not, conservatives and perhaps even racists may try to take advantage of the result. Either way, it will skew the perception of one of America's founding fathers.

More generally, the march of DNA is gradually stamping out those pleasing and often important fakes that so enliven the past. One of my favourite historical figures was quietly but clinically destroyed by science last month. He went by the name of Karl Wilhelm Naundorff, but until his death in The Netherlands in 1845 he stolidly proclaimed himself to be Charles Louis de Bourbon, the son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and thus the rightful king of France, even though according to every reliable account the Dauphin perished in a Paris prison in 1795.

Naundorff had some 30 rivals as pretenders to the French throne including one, magnificently, who

Throughout the world, bodies are being dug up to establish dead certainties

was black. Frizzy-haired, moustachioed and slightly mad, Naundorff spent time in prison for forgery before announcing his royal lineage and being enthusiastically taken up by French legitimists. His was a wonderful, if never very convincing, story. Then a Belgian genetic scientist came along, with some locks of hair from Marie Antoinette's sisters and a piece of Naundorff's exhumed bone and put an end to the fun by declaring what everyone had thought all along: Naundorff was a fake. We will probably never hear of him again.

Future generations may be quite baffled by Voltaire's story about the Man in the Iron Mask incarcerated in the Bastille being Louis XIV's twin brother. "Why didn't they just swab him?" they will ask.

"We are a country of impostors, it is deep in the Russian soul," Eduard Radzinsky, author of *The Last Tsar*, said recently of the continued refusal by some to accept the DNA verdict on the Romanovs. The same is true of Britain, where we venerate a good fraud. In 1874 a man came forward claiming to be Sir Roger Tichborne, the heir to a large estate who had vanished en route to Rio de Janeiro 20 years earlier. The missing man was slim and well-educated while the Claimant, as he became known, was illiterate, vulgar and weighed 24 stone, a consideration that did nothing to hinder support for his cause.

For the Tichbornes, the Claimant was not only an anti-establishment symbol, but proof of the fundamental belief that an individual's identity could never be fully established. Long after he was exposed as Arthur Orton, an ambitious butcher from Wapping, his supporters insisted that he was Roger Tichborne.

By reducing history to a string of chromosomes, much of its romance is

being stripped away. Even Hollywood, which never gave a jot for historical accuracy, has become liable to the wagging finger of science. *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, the film starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford, begins with the admirable semi-disclaimer: "Most of what follows is true" and ends in freeze-frame as the bandits come out of their bolt-hole, guns blazing, leaving the question of whether they get away forever open. Until, that is, an American forensic scientist decided we needed to be told exactly how much of the story was true. The real Butch and Sundance were tracked down to a village in the Andes and we were told they had probably shot each other to avoid being killed by their pursuers.

Something close to a dictatorship of DNA testing is emerging, an insistence that science has the right to prove or disprove simply because it can, regardless of the wishes of those affected. This was dramatically demonstrated in France this year when Yves Montand, the late actor-singer, was exhumed, deprived of some of his DNA and then reburied because a young woman claimed to be his daughter. The tests showed she was not, but Montand's specific wishes and grave had been violated, one suspects, simply because DNA testing had made it possible to establish his paternity, not because it was morally necessary to do so.

Similarly, the marketing behind the new and controversial self-testing DNA kit implies that men who have "nagging doubts" about whether they are the father of a child have some moral duty to find out for sure. When the truth is thrust at you, however, it is far harder.

But perhaps the days of the pretender are not quite over. DNA tests rely on physical remains, and where no such evidence exists there is still room for doubt. The grave in Yekaterinburg contained no trace of the sickly Tsarevitch, Alexei. Sure enough, earlier this month one Oleg Filatov, a customs inspector, came forward to announce that he was the son of Alexei, who had survived the massacre and cured himself of haemophilia, according to Mr Filatov, with an inspirational combination of raw reindeer meat, seal blubber and bulls' eyes.

On second thoughts, Mr Ducker, keep the account open.

Books to bewitch a child

Reading just for fun is fine, says Sarah Johnson

Eventually, my son Tycho, eight, had to admit that reading *Harry Potter* and *The Philosopher's Stone* and watching television at the same time does not work, but for weeks the book was glued to the end of his nose — in the bath, on the Tube, everywhere. Thousands of other children left the same, which is why Joanne Rowling's first book and her next, *Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets* (about life at Hogwarts, a boarding school for young wizards and witches) have broken records for children's books, becoming bestsellers — and not by virtue of being TV spin-offs.

Such a marriage of good writing, inventiveness and sheer child-appeal has not been seen since Roald Dahl, perhaps even since Tolkien, Lewis, and Ransome. Rowlings has woken up a whole generation to reading. In the 2020s, thirtysomething book-lovers will know each other by smug references to Diagon Alley and Quidditch. So why on earth did she not win the Carnegie Medal for an outstanding children's novel this week? The prize went last year to a fairly good book about drug addicts: *River Boy*, a book so boring and pious you wish it was about drug addicts. Here the heroine, 13 going on 47, sobs by her grandfather's deathbed: "She had nothing to ask of him, at least nothing for herself... The only thing what follows is true" and ends in show love to Dad. But love could not be fashioned just by the asking... "Just be happy, grandpa," she said.

Sick bags, please. Here is typical *Harry Potter*: "Easily the most boring lesson was History of Magic, which was the only class taught by a ghost. Professor Binns had been very old indeed when he had fallen asleep in front of the staffroom fire, and got up next morning to teach, leaving his body behind him."

In favouring a book that will "help children to come to terms" with a social issue, the librarians who awarded the Carnegie betray the fact that they want children primarily to learn from books. They have forgotten that unless people thoroughly enjoy reading before they are 12, they may never do so. No child or teenager will beg for the next *River Boy*. The poor librarians are only acting out a tension that has existed ever since the Victorians raised the morality tale to 'high art and Lewis Carroll became an overnight success by satirising it mercilessly in *Alice*.

Some modern morality tales are brilliant — others prefer to ingratiate parents. As J. R. R. Tolkien said of Andrew Lang, the fairytale collector: "Too often, he had an eye on the faces of other clever people over the heads of his child-audience."

Parents fumblingly pass these books to a child rather than talk face-to-face about a difficult subject. Like a theme-park ride, they give the impression of experiencing reality while in fact remaining in the realm of the virtual. To be a well-off Western child is to be under lock and key. We pretend to look after children by corralling them into a soft, safe ghetto of play. No wonder Rowling's basic concept — that some children have magic powers without realising it — has caught their imagination. What freedom! What power!

Harry Potter is as moral a story as you could find, exalting loyalty and self-sacrifice. But it speaks so directly to the aching hearts of children that some grown-ups cannot even hear.

The author is the children's book reviewer of The Times.

Poor Archie

SIR ARCHIBALD HAMILTON, MP, is being forced to flog his £4.25 million estate to fund the household. The former Conservative minister has exchanged contracts on the 350-acre Snowdenham estate in Surrey, the family's main address since the 1870s, which is positively ancestral in the modern Tory party. A former whip and PPS to Margaret Thatcher, Sir Archie was a member of Lloyd's for eight years from 1986, just as things grew a bit peaky there. He was also denied juicy jobs because he spent 11 years in office.

"All my friends who are something in the City have been earning vast amounts and invested in fantastic pensions," he says. "The house is very costly to keep up."

Despite the windfall, Sir Archie, because he spent much of his childhood at Snowdenham (pictured), the 3rd Baron Hamilton of Dalzell, his Dad, moved the family into the main house, a glorious 17th-century affair, in the 1950s when Archie was still playing with his train set. The three daughters of



Sir Archie and Lady H were also brought up on the estate but have now flown. The couple have yet to find a new home, but are looking further west. Generously, the new owners have given them until next spring before the pantechnicons arrive.



OH NO, I'M NEVER GOING TO FIND A TIE TO GO WITH THIS SHIRT

● SYNCHRONISED swimming has nothing on this: eight men are to submerge themselves in the Avon for the world's first underwater Morris dancing performance. Iwan Thomas, of the newly formed *Tewkesbury Underwater Morris Team*, says: "Our hankies may get a little soggy and our bells may rust, but we are not concerned."

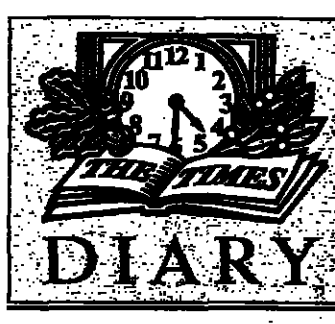
Daddy's girl

IS THERE no respite for that libidinous lobbyist Derek Draper? It would appear that he may have dragged Geoffrey Robinson into a sex scandal. Hitherto, the embattled Paymaster General had not been ensnared in Dollygate.

Now Steve Platt of *Tribune* is claiming that Dolly "took a shine" to his daughter Rachel and tried to lure her for a weekend to Robinson's Paris flat. "Would she work on his book with him [at £100 a day, rather than his £250 an hour]? Would she come to Barbados with him?" claims Platt about Draper.

The lobbyist then told her "You'll say 'yes' eventually" when she had refused for the umpteenth time. He was right. She did, to a meal — and he took her to Peter Mandelson's new flat, where she expressed admiration for the minister's Minimalist tastes by asking if he had just moved in.

It seems that Platt did not entirely approve of the match. He noted Draper's "ability to stuff more explosives into a sentence than pound notes into his pocket". Unkind. Dolly will be back, and he won't settle for a match lower than a



JASPER GERARD

duke's daughter. "Rachel is a lovely girl," he says. "If fathers of all my dates wreaked revenge in this way, it would be truly gruesome."

● IT IS the biggest source of corporate angst: to have or not to have a glass box. John Humphrys, James Naughtie and co, who have just



moved to new BBC quarters at White City, will not have their own offices. But Jeremy Paxman (pictured), the Newsnight dandy, will. Editors are the only others to have private offices. "It is true," explains a flunky, "but I am sure Jeremy would not mind others using it."

Pick and mix

IN A novel move even for a management consultant, Archie Norman, the Tory Central Office honcho, has recruited a senior Liberal Democrat as an adviser. He has already alarmed staff by handing them thinking-caps to wear and black bin-bags to empty their papers into, and has now hired Peter Samuel, who stood in Reigate last time. "It is now acknowledged it was a political mistake," says Crispin Blunt, the Tory MP for Reigate, who I gather has protested about it at a meeting of the 1922 Committee of backbenchers.

Samuel worked with Archie at Asda and he is no doubt a very able human resources manager and he was working for free as a favour to Archie. But it was particularly unfortunate at a time of downsizing of staff. I am sure that lessons have been learnt. I'm not.

● TIES are strained between Bromyard, Hereford, and its twin town in France. The theft of a soft copper cockerel-shaped weather-vane from the top of Bromyard's 17th-century former Congregational Chapel has been blamed on French guests. And a few crates of celebratory chateau plonk.



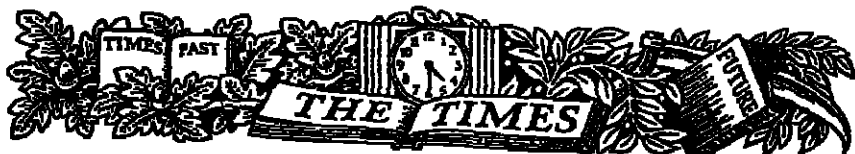
CLARIDGE'S, once the bostery of choice for kings, prime ministers and Hollywood stars, has fallen on hard times. Since spring, the Mayfair establishment, increasingly left behind by chic newcomers, has had a run-in with its builders and until last week it was surviving without its own dedicated manager.

But now, I hear, the hotel's new owner, an American investment bank, may consider selling. Blackstone denies this but might "standstill" (ie like the suburban "lounge" of a polyester magnate from Wyoming).

Its demise is terribly sad. Founded with the encouragement of the Prince Regent, Claridge's provided scented pillows for top people for a century and a half. During the war, it was home for most of Europe's exiled monarchs. When Churchill was defeated in the 1945 election he took a suite while temporarily homeless.

The hotel has also been a drop-in for the postwar jetset, including Madonna, Frank Sinatra, Bianca Jagger and Spencer Tracy. A sign of its decline? That it keeps Dame Barbara Cartland sweet by reserving a table for her covered in pink flowers.

سكوا من الأهل



THE LAMBETH WAY

The Anglican Communion must hold fast to its core beliefs

Other than in time of world war, bishops and archbishops from the worldwide Anglican Communion have gathered for the Lambeth Conference every ten years since 1867. The 1998 conference will be inaugurated tomorrow in Canterbury Cathedral, and it presents the Archbishop of Canterbury with a formidable challenge.

It took all the skills of Dr George Carey's adroit predecessor, Lord Runcie, to hold together the 1988 conference, which came close to splitting the Anglican Communion over the ordination of women. With these wounds still far from healed, the deliberations this year run some risk of being overshadowed by demands by lesbian and gay Christian movements for the ordination of practising homosexuals. Like all mankind, the Lambeth Conference seems born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. It even originated in a celebrated 19th-century controversy, the outrage of Anglican traditionalists over the enlightened cultural pluralism of Bishop Colenso of Natal.

The Lambeth method has to surmount differences by emphasising what a report before this conference describes as "the creative fusion of provincial autonomy and interdependence". But this year, there is a more than usually sombre sense that inclusiveness can go too far. Pluralism has an obvious place in this far-flung Church of 80 million. But relativism in matters of belief must have limits. Dr Carey has taken a controversial decision in declining to bar the participation of Jack Spong, Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, a vehement gay rights activist and self-styled atheist who has asked the Communion to approve 12 theses which include the proposition that "theism is dead".

To the great majority of the Anglican faithful, and to the bishops who represent them, this combination of far-out theological historicists and Western political correctness is both divisive and irrelevant to the questions that ought to unite Anglicans in prayer and deliberation. With some 800 bishops attending, this Lambeth Conference will not

only be the largest ever, partly because of Dr Carey's wise decision to invite suffragan as well as diocesan bishops. It ought also to meet, as Dr Carey wishes it to do, the needs of the rapidly growing Anglican Communion in Africa and other poor regions.

Because these churches are poor, they have far fewer bishops per worshipper than, for example, the wealthy American Episcopal Church, which counts about 2.5 million members. It would be wholly wrong for the 200 American bishops at the conference to crowd out the voices of Nigeria province, which has nearly 18 million, or those of Kenya or Central Africa. They will probably obtain a united stance on cancelling Third World debt, and a fund for churches in crisis zones; but they are equally concerned to combat Aids through a clear theological stance on chastity and sexuality. To these clergy, the homosexuality debate is both shocking and destructive. Western clerics may equally resist the quest in *Called to Full Humanity*, a report to the conference by the Most Rev Njongonkulu Ndungane, Archbishop Tutu's successor in Cape Town, to open debate on whether the Church should depart from centuries of doctrine and accept that polygamous marriage, widespread in some African dioceses, can show "faithfulness and righteousness".

If the Anglican Communion cannot avoid sexual politics, it must take care not to be dominated by them. That may require, as *The Virginia Report* suggests, the Lambeth Conference "to say with some firmness that a particular local practice or theory is incompatible with Christian faith". That has not been the Lambeth way. It has wisely inclined to let the Church's autonomous provinces identify with the cultures in which they preach the Gospel. But should latitude extend to agreement to differ over the core of faith, those things necessary to Christian salvation, the Anglican Communion will weaken. Were it lastingly to split the Anglican Church, the reconciliation of every view would be too dearly bought.

MONEY WON'T BUY HIM LOVE

The Scottish Nationalists have reaped where Labour has sown

The Prime Minister visited Scotland yesterday, Leader of a party which won more than 45 per cent of Scottish votes in the general election and whose most radical decision to date has been the creation of a Scottish parliament. Yet instead of basking in adulation, Tony Blair was on the back foot. Outflanked by the Scottish National Party, Labour is in danger of losing next year's Scottish election. His attack on the SNP had the tone of a Leader of the Opposition.

North of the border, "Blairism" is seen by many Labour supporters as the alien creature of trendy Soho clubs and Westminster think-tanks. While new Labour was ditching Clause Four in England, the Scottish Labour Party was busy reaffirming its socialist credentials. Its antics before the general election may have irritated Mr Blair, but he could shrug off what it was saying, knowing that Scots would vote Labour come what may. They knew the SNP to be irrelevant at Westminster, so both old and new Labour could unite against the Tories.

After May 1, new Labour's honeymoon in England was not matched north of the border, where Scots filed in alarming numbers for a "quickie divorce". Labour has been weak over corruption and nepotism in local government, and foolish in denying a knighthood to Sean Connery because of his SNP affiliation. Its political agenda ill-matches Scottish expectations. Disillusionment rolled in like fog on a Scottish moor.

The SNP has reaped where Labour sowed. Labour's manifesto prediction that Scottish devolution would "strengthen the Union and the threat of separatism would be removed". Instead, it has given the SNP a new élan. As Magnus Linklater wrote in *The Times* earlier this week, the prospect of a Scottish parliament has strengthened Scots'

sense of nationhood. By campaigning alongside new Labour in the devolution referendum, the SNP gained a legitimacy and prominence that it never enjoyed before. Some of its policies (such as renationalisation, higher public spending and a 50 per cent rate of tax on middle-income earners) are an antediluvian throwback to Labour's 1983 manifesto. The SNP itself, realising this, wiped them off its website. But if the opinion polls are right, dissatisfaction with Labour is such that many Scots would stomach them for the sake of independence.

During the election campaigns of 1992 and 1997, John Major warned voters that devolution would lose the genie of separatism. Mr Blair's strategy to put the genie back in the bottle is to buy the SNP's support. Higher spending on schools and hospitals, and new benefits for pensioners, are the Danegeld offered to keep the SNP at bay. Mr Blair should not delude himself that money will buy Labour the love of Scots.

Like John Major and Margaret Thatcher before him, Mr Blair needs a more effective way of communicating with the Scottish electorate — and of spelling out the dangers of voting for the SNP. He was wrong yesterday to accuse the SNP of having "no policies". It has; and they provide a ripe target for new Labour. Attacking plans to raise taxes and renationalise industry would confirm that Mr Blair's party really has changed, and that it understands the damage they would do to Scotland's economy. His presentational skills should be used to spell out the benefits of a Scottish parliament within the Union — which he should robustly defend. In his foreword to Labour's manifesto, Mr Blair wrote "I want a Britain that is one nation". He has his work cut out to prevent it from being one divided in two.

A SLIPPERY BUSINESS

Crofters seek a new market for seaweed

For holidaymakers it is the slippery stuff that makes seaside rocks treacherous. But for Hebridean crofters it is integral to their existence. Seaweed is harvested by subsistence farmers to provide a supplementary income. On North and South Uist, some 40 families boost scanty finances by kelping, working at low tide along freezing Atlantic foreshores, cutting bladderwrack with a sickle and roping in their harvest as the tide rises and sets the fronds afloat.

Seaweed has a long and tangled history. It was first used medicinally. As long ago as 60BC, affluent Romans retiring to coastal villas for the summer season used it to protect themselves from sunlight. By 1578, King Henry III of France and his court were sheathing themselves in green strands to cure scrofula. And during the Napoleonic Wars the Scots smuggled seaweed to France where its iodine was invaluable as an antiseptic. As a food it is rich in minerals, vitamins and iron. In Victorian spas it was served as a sauce for mutton; in Ireland it was a crofter's cabbage; in Japan it makes a nutritious wrapping for sushi.

But in the outer islands of Scotland seaweed has been harvested for generations not only as a rank-smelling fertiliser, but commercially for the alginates it contains. Their acids are used in the manufacture of

films, gels, rubber and linoleum, and as a colloid in cosmetics, car polishes and paints. Organic derivatives are used as food gums in ice-creams, puddings and processed cheeses. For years the Kelco company, based in Ayrshire, has propped up the islands' seaweed industry. Now, after a \$100 billion merger between its parent company, Monsanto, and American Health Products, it is threatening to pull out completely. Weed richer in alginates can be harvested and processed more cheaply in Peru. But the meagre economy of the Outer Isles can ill-afford to forfeit the income.

Islanders need to look to other outlets to support their traditional industry. Seaweed is becoming an increasingly common feature of British cuisine — in laver bread and dulse and vogueish salads. Sushi bars are springing up all over the country. Seaweed lowers cholesterol levels; as a beauty treatment it detoxifies, moisturises and firms, toning and revitalising jaded skin.

Like the manufacturers of Harris tweeds or Islay single malts, islanders should be looking to bespoke markets. As a renewable, organic resource, seaweed would appeal to modish notions of eco-friendly business. Without such an initiative, this home-grown industry will vanish from the Outer Isles and not a wrack remain.

Blueprint for a reformed Lords

From Mr Richard A. Edwards

Sir, Your excellent leader, "Lords in Parliament" (July 10; see also letters, same day), is certainly an attractive blueprint for a reformed second chamber. However, it begs a series of questions.

It is not clear why a nominated member of a reformed Upper House should enjoy the same voting rights as a member returned by the people. There is a strong case, flowing from the principle of democracy, that life peers should only enjoy the right to attend and speak, but not vote, in the Upper House.

This would allow their Lordships to continue to bring their expertise and experience into Parliament while at the same time rendering the issue of patronage largely irrelevant.

Equally, why should the Church of England continue to enjoy an exclusive right to represent religious interests in the Parliament of the United Kingdom? Arguably, *ex-officio* non-voting seats should be created in the reformed chamber for the leaders of not only the other major Christian Churches present in the UK but also non-Christian faiths such as Judaism and Islam.

Finally, it makes little sense to continue to call a chamber of predominantly elected representatives the House of Lords. The chamber must be renamed the Senate, with those members elected by the people styled Senators.

Yours etc,
RICHARD A. EDWARDS,
60 Queen's Road,
Devizes,
Wiltshire SN10 5HW,
July 10.

From Mr David Gladstone

Sir, Your leading article argued cogently that the appointed element of a reformed Upper House should emerge from a special commission, "not from Prime Ministerial patronage alone".

Perhaps Mr Blair, who prides himself on his modernity but is not known as a student of history, is as unaware that patronage was coming to be seen as scandalous by the political class 150 years ago as that this aspect of it relies on royal prerogative powers rooted in medieval notions of the divine right of kings.

It is hard to see how the exercise of these powers in politically controversial areas can be consistent with a professed intention to "empower the people".

If Parliament were really supreme, as most people still fondly imagine it to be, it would pass an Act restricting the use of prerogative power to equally traditional but more appropriate subjects, such as the protection of sturgeon and whales.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GLADSTONE,
1 Mountfort Terrace,
London N1 1J,
July 13.

From Dr Paul Hooper

Sir, Your leader and Peter Riddell's article (July 14) bring forward the means by which the Upper Chamber should be reformed.

I would prefer to see the present chamber replaced by members democratically elected within a wide range of national bodies, to be chosen by a "nominating commission", similar to the boundary commissions.

Such bodies would include the learned professions, industry, commerce and trade unions, conservation organisations, local government and many others covering every field of interest.

It is probable that some present peers would be elected to the new chamber, thus ensuring some continuity; but the new chamber must adopt a modern organisation and abandon useless traditions (like the uncomfortable Woolsack).

Yours faithfully,
PAUL HOOPER,
Selborne,
Pyle Shute, Chale,
Isle of Wight PO38 2LE,
July 15.

From Mr A. Kipps

Sir, Every human society, from the tribal chief with his council of elders onwards, has felt the need to adopt an institutional framework as a protection against tyranny and machinery for consultation and upholding rights. The scale and complexity of modern government makes a process of scrutiny and revision indispensable.

The present House of Lords, probably the best second chamber in the world, fulfils the role superbly. It is beyond the power of the Government or any party to control, in a way that elected members, dependent for re-election on a party machine, can never be.

Secondly, its historic format contributes something unique and enormously important: courtesy, integrity, intelligence, patriotism and a collective ethos of service.

All this is built round the presence of the hereditary peers and cannot survive without them. It would be shameful if we allowed this priceless inheritance to be replaced by some form of "modern" rubber stamp.

Yours sincerely,
A. KIPPS,
68 The Crescent,
Hadleigh, Essex SS2 2HR,
July 15.

Lack of vision at heart of London?

From the Director of the Civic Trust

Sir, There has been general acclaim for the Deputy Prime Minister's call for a renaissance of our towns and cities and for improvements to the quality of life of their inhabitants. This trust wholeheartedly supports his crusade, but if it is to be given substance then we need a few landmark projects which will show that attitudes are changing and will set a standard for the future.

As the Directors of the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery point out (letter, July 13), Trafalgar Square provides a golden opportunity. Despite overwhelming backing from the public after extensive consultation (81 per cent in favour), the pedestrianisation project is in jeopardy because of Westminster council's unfortunate decision to withhold its support.

The whole programme, imaginatively designed by Sir Norman Foster and Partners, involves improvements to Whitehall and Westminster as well as Trafalgar Square. Trafalgar Square is, however, its heart.

The square is of national rather than local significance. The trust therefore urges Mr Prescott to take personal charge of the project, and find a way to provide some at least of the benefits offered by the Foster plan in time for the millennium.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL C. WILLIAM,
Director, Civic Trust,
17 Carlton House Terrace,
London SW1Y 5AW,
July 15.

From Mr Michael Cassidy

Sir, The World Squares project for Trafalgar Square would greatly enhance the positive message for London which has gained momentum as lottery funding and imaginative urban design schemes like this have begun to have effect.

My involvement in the processes that led to the introduction of the City's "ring of steel" convinces me that where she lies buried and, judging by the crowds who attended the opening of the grounds a few weeks ago, distance is no deterrent to those wishing to make such a pilgrimage.

Is there really any need for a further memorial garden, which is likely to cause disruption and congestion of traffic? Could not those who really wish to pay their respects enter their nearest place of worship and light a candle or say a prayer in her memory instead?

Yours faithfully,
HAZEL M. WOOD,
14e Sloane Court East, SW3 4TG,
July 15.

From Councillor Christopher Buckmaster

Sir, As a councillor representing the ward which includes Kensington Palace, I am saddened by the controversy over the proposed Diana Memorial Garden. It cannot be right to force through a memorial which is not only unwanted but actively opposed by the overwhelming majority of people who live in the area.

No memorial to any loved person should be created against a background of controversy and anger. What a way to remember a great lady.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER BUCKMASTER,
23 Kensington Place, W8 7PT,
July 14.

From Mr Michael Levete

Sir, I am a lay reader in the City of London church of St Giles Cripplegate, on July 5 my sermon was on the appointed theme of the Church's mission to all men. It was with hurt and surprise that the next day I read in a newsletter from the College of Preachers (to which I belong) that it has decided to sever its sponsor relationship with your newspaper this year on the grounds that *The Times* had insisted that, in future, nominations for the hitherto very successful Preacher of the Year Award should be opened to Jewish entries.

I have found the college to be of good, practical help as I struggle to prepare sermons relevant to the problems of parish life, but I cannot understand the meaning behind this decision when the new development director says that in the college's search for new funds it "had to demonstrate that we are truly ecumenical".

I wish being a Christian nowadays was as simple as it was 50 years ago in my youth.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL LEVETE,
64 Speed House,
Barbican, EC2Y 8AU,
July 8.

Today in 'The Times'

From Mr Jason Berry
Sir, Re "Tomorrow in *The Times*" (July 17, front page), could we have less of Matthew Parris hugging his mother and more football please?

Yours sincerely,
J. BERRY,
44 Ramshaw Drive,
Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6UB,
July 17.

an incremental approach, led by the landowners concerned and endorsed by the local authority, will achieve success without the need for a public inquiry.

Without political leadership and determination, this will be just another example of a great idea left to expire on the spike of local opposition which fails to recognise the importance of managing our world-renowned sites in a deliberate, not an amateurish and accidental, fashion.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL CASSIDY
(Policy Chairman,
Corporation of London, 1992-97),
Members' Room,
Guildhall, EC2P 2EJ,
mcassidy@netcomuk.co.uk
July 14.

From Mr C. J. Glaister

Sir, Westminster council's decision not to approve the plans for pedestrianising part of Trafalgar Square and Whitehall illustrates the kind of problem that the proposed mayor of London must be empowered to tackle when he takes office.

Pressure from residents who fear traffic diversions to their part of the borough has persuaded councillors to veto the least radical of Sir Norman Foster's proposals for pedestrianising part of Trafalgar Square. Their lack of vision starkly demonstrates why the management of a great city cannot be left in the hands of thirty-odd individual boroughs.

There is an unfortunate lack of clarity in the White Paper setting out the powers of the mayor in relation to strategic planning issues such as this. Those framing the legislation that will give the mayor his mandate should ensure that he or she has the necessary planning powers to prevent a similar failure of political will occurring in the future.

Yours sincerely,
C. J. GLAISTER,
18 Huntington Street, N1 1BS,
July 15.

From Mr William Midwood

Sir, The Environment Agency's proposal to close salmon rivers to fishermen throughout England and Wales during next year's season (report, later editions, July 10; see also letters, July 8 and 13) is a foolish contemplation and is unlikely to lead to a recovery of salmon stocks.

Government research over many years on the Gironck Burn, Aberdeenshire, has shown that normal salmon spawning stock could be restricted ten-fold and still produce the optimum number of smolts.

Further work on the North Esk River, Aberdeenshire, has shown that sea survival of salmon in the 1970s was running as high as 45 per cent, but I understand that these survival rates have now dropped to as low as 10 per cent.

Although much can be done within our river systems to produce more smolts, the main problem lies at sea. We need to identify the causes and this can only be done with government help. The Environment Agency should be addressing the problem at sea, not reducing a critical income source of the remote countryside.

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM MIDWOOD
(Managing Director),
River Beauty Fishings Company Ltd,
Broomy Bank, Hampton Heath,
Malpas, Cheshire SY14 8LT,
July 16.

Weekend Money letters, page 53

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046, e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Days that make a perfect summer

From Mr Michael Goldman

Sir, How surprising that one of our elder statesmen (letter from Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, July 15) appears to share the common assumption that hot weather equals good weather. Moving about London is intolerable when the temperature rises above 80 degrees and uniformly blue skies are as boring as uniformly grey skies. There have been some beautiful cloudscapes recently of the sort that occur when the weather is unsettled.

I agree with some of Lord Jenkins's criteria for an enjoyable summer day but suggest a temperature of 75F as an absolute maximum.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL GOLDMAN,
1 Lyndale Close,
Blackheath, SE3 7RG,
July 15.

From Dr J. B. Cole

Sir, Lord Jenkins is right that daytime temperatures are more important than those at night. But surely weekends and Bank Holidays should carry more weight than ordinary weekdays?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN COLE,
Meadow Barn,
Buckland Monachorum,
Kelverton, Devon PL20 7NW,
j.cole@virgin.net
July 16.

From Mr Nicholas Green

Sir, In my view the best measurement of the quality of a summer is the absolute minimum number of days on which I have to mow my lawn.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS GREEN,
22 Trevelyn Way,
Rossett, near Wrexham LL12 0EJ,
July 16.

From Mr John Barnes

Sir, Pace Lord Jenkins, the best measure of a summer is the number of matchdays lost at cricket.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BARNES,
The Barn, Burgham,
Sheepstree Lane,
Echingham, East Sussex TN19 7AZ,
July 16.

Power title

From Professor A. G. Cross
Sir, Long before the *Oxford Dictionary* recommended following the example of *The Times* in the spelling of "tsar" (leading article, July 14), the Reverend Thomas Consett, formerly chaplain to the British community in Moscow, Archangel and St Petersburg, wrote in the preface to his *Present State and Regulations of the Church of Russia* (1729):

And to give my English Readers Satisfaction, as to my writing 'Tsar', I assure them that the Slavonians and Russians both write and speak it as I do; and being it is my Lot to appear first among my Countrymen as a Translator out of those Languages, I take this earliest Opportunity to give the Tsar of Russia his right name; for 'Csar' is a mere corruption of foreigners...

By the same token, were we to continue the unfortunate new usage, the all-powerful female would be, *pace* Mr Paddy Heazell (letter, July 13), "tsaritsa", not "czarina".

Yours sincerely,
ANTHONY CROSS,
Department of Slavonic Studies,
University of Cambridge,
Sidgwick Avenue,
Cambridge CB3 9DA.

Effective sounds

From Mr Kit Bird
Sir, I enjoyed your report, "BBC turns on the rainforest in NT" (July 15), in which the radio programme-makers used a domestic shower in a bathroom in Tunfell Park to create the illusion of a tropical rainforest.

As a "cost-effective example of location recording", however, I believe that it does not compare with my own experiences as a very junior radio sound-effects assistant working on children's programmes in the 1950s. In addition to such relatively simple things as fairies sliding down a sunbeam, I remember being once called upon to simulate the sounds of a space-ship twisting and turning under bombardment from a meteor shower.

We achieved this effect by playing a recording of a lift stopping and starting at the same time as one (at half-speed) of bacon frying.

Hardly *Star Wars*, but it worked.

Yours faithfully,
C. BIRD,
Middle House,
Chelmsford, Suffolk IP7 7HU,
July 15.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr T.J. Carter and Miss G.E. Ramsay... The engagement is announced between Timothy, second son of Mr and Mrs John Carter, of Great Thickbarn Farm, Bedfordshire, and Gillian, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Samuel Ramsay, of Giffnock, Glasgow.

Marriages

Mr J. Nicholls and Mrs R.M. Cartwright... The marriage took place on July 11, 1998, at St Nicholas' Church, Remenham, Gloucestershire, John and Rosamund, widow of Himley, both of Henley-on-Thames. The Right Rev John Bone officiated.

Latest wills

Lady (Ailsa Mary) Smith, of Moberley, Knutsford, Cheshire, left estate valued at £1,575,959 net. His left £10,000 each to St Ann's Hospice, Macclesfield, and St. Elizabeth's Hospice, Macclesfield and £25,000 to the Trustees of the PCC of the Parish of Moberley.



Katharine Ogilvie and James Hastie who have recently announced their engagement. They live in London and are to marry in Scotland in October

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE July 17: The Prince of Wales, on behalf of The Queen, held an investiture at Buckingham Palace this morning.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY: Mr Kenneth Armitage, sculptor, 82; Lady Bingley, social worker, 73; Mr Edward Bond, playwright and director, 64; Mr Richard Branson, chairman, Virgin, 48; Lord Carswell, Dr B. Mc Vee, Dykin, Government Actuary, 55; Mr G.H.G. Daggart, former Headmaster, King's School, Bruton, 73; Viscount Escher, 85; Mr Nick Faldo, golfer, 41; Mr John Fraser, former chair, Ciba UK Group, 67; Senator John Glenn, astronaut, 77; Mr David Hemery, athlete, 54; Miss Elizabeth Jennings, author, 72; Vice-Admiral Sir Louis Le Bailly, 83; Mr Dennis Lillee, cricketer, 50; Mr Nelson Mandela, O.M., President of South Africa, 80; Mr Anthony Miles, publisher, 68; Mr Richard Pasco, actor, 72; Sir Robert Speed, QC, former Counsel to the Speaker, 83; Dr G. M. Stephen, High Master, Manchester Grammar School, 49; Sir Jamie Stormonth Darling, former director, National Trust for Scotland, 82; Mr Jim Watt, former Foreign Secretary, 78; Mr Peter Vize-Chancellor, Nottingham University, 75; Mr Yevgeny Yevushenko, poet, 65.

TOMORROW: Lord Justice Auld, 61; Lord Bethell, 60; Mr David Bowe, MEP, 43; Sir Norman Brain, former diplomat, 91; Mr Cameron Cochrane, former Headmaster, Fettes College, 65; Judge Viscount Colville of Culross, QC, 65; Professor R. Duckworth, Emeritus Professor of Oral Medicine, London University, 69; Baroness Elles, 77; Mr Roy Gossard, architect and Arabist, 75; Miss Evelyn King, percussionist, 33; Sir Anthony Grahham, former chairman, Joint Consultants Committee, 68; Major-General D.E. Isles, 74; Dr Carole Jordan, FRS, astronomer, 57; Mr Richard Knight, former Headmaster, Oundle School, 83; Sir Herbert Laming (file peer), former chief inspector, Civil Services Inspectorate of Health, 62; Mr Brian R.W. Lockhart, Headmaster, Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen, 54; Professor Mary McGowan, nephrologist, 75; Mr Brian May, rock guitarist, 51; Sir David Money-Coutts, former chairman, Coutts and Company, 67; Mr Dominic Muldowney, former director of music, National Theatre, 46; Mr Ian Napier, tennis player, 52; Mr Adrian Noble, artistic director, Royal Shakespeare Company, 48; Dr Archie Norman, paediatrician, 86; Sir Frederick O'Brien, QC, former Sheriff Principal of Lothian and Borders, 81; Air Chief Marshal Sir David P. Evans, 63; Sir Dennis Stevenson, chairman, Tate Gallery Foundation, 53; His Honour Sir Lawrence Verney, former Recorder of London, 74; Professor Adrian Webb, Vice-Chancellor, Glamorgan University, 55; Mr Robert Wood, former chairman, SmithKline Beecham, 65; Professor Richard Whitfield, former Warden, St George's House, Windsor Castle, 60.

Service dinners

Intelligence Corps The Duke of Edinburgh, Colonel-in-Chief, was the principal guest at the annual dinner of the Intelligence Corps Officers' Dinner Club held on Thursday night at The Priory, Chicksands, General Sir Roger Wheeler, Colonel Commandant, presided. Among those present were Mr S.C. Whitbread, Vice-Admiral West and Mr J.C. Gains.

Anniversaries

TODAY BIRTHS: Robert Hooke, physicist, Freshwater, Oxford, 1635; Gilbert White, clergyman and naturalist, Selborne, Hampshire, 1720; Reagus O'Connor, Charist leader, Connorsville, Co Cork, 1794; William Makepeace Thackeray, Calcutta, 1811; W.C. Grace, cricketer, Downend, Gloucestershire, 1864; Philip Snowden, Viscount Snowden, statesman, Ickneshaw, Yorkshire, 1864.

Major Michael Hammond-Maude

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Major Michael Hammond-Maude will be held at St Pauls Church, Wilton Place, London SW1, on Tuesday, July 28, at noon.

The Royal Society

Sir Aaron Klug, OM, President of The Royal Society, and officers of the society received new Fellows and Foreign Members elected earlier this year at the annual Admission Day held yesterday at 6 Carlton House Terrace. A luncheon was held before the ceremony.

Luncheon

Guil of Editors Mr Bob Sachdev, Editor of the Cambridge Evening News and President of the Guild of Editors, was the host at a luncheon held yesterday at Bloomsbury House, Great Russell Street, in honour of Ms Hilary Armstrong, Minister for Local Government and Housing. The Editors of the Leicester Mercury, the News, Portsmouth and the Western Mail, Cardiff, and the Secretary of the Parliamentary and Legal Committees were among those present.

Cocktail party

Staffordshire Lieutenantcy The Deputy Lieutenants of Staffordshire entertained the Lord-Lieutenant and Mrs Hawley at a summer cocktail party held last night at Preesford Manor, near Whittington, Lichfield.

University news

Oxford George Webb Medley Prize 1998 The prize for the best overall performance for the MSc in Economics for Development has been awarded to Ms Gargee Ghosh, Somerville College.

Royal engagements at the weekend

TODAY: The Duke of York will visit the 1998 Open Championship at the Royal Birkdale Golf Club, Southport, at 11.30. The Princess Royal, as patron, National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, will open their new bureau at 18 Belle Vue Road, Salath, Cornwall, at 11.0, will visit the South West Film Commission Offices, at 11.40, and will visit Salath Shop Mobility, at 12.15.

New ambassador

Mr David Lycosm has been appointed Ambassador to the Slovak Republic from October in succession to Mr Peter Harborne.

Dinner

Institute of Legal Executives Mr Paul Reed, the newly elected President of the Institute of Legal Executives, was the guest of honour at the inauguration dinner held last night at Harrington Hall, Kensington. Master Deniz Lush was the principal speaker.

ON THIS DAY

July 18, 1969 The chequered career of Senator Edward Kennedy started with allegations of cheating at Harvard. This incident, when a girl drowned in a car he was driving, dogged his political career and led to his withdrawal as a presidential candidate in 1970.

CRASH CHARGE

From MICHAEL KNIPE - New York A minor charge of leaving the scene of an accident and failing to report it within a reasonable time will be lodged against Senator Edward Kennedy after his car crash yesterday in which a young woman died. Senator Kennedy suffered concussion and wandered about for eight hours, apparently in shock, before reporting the accident.

PERSONAL COLUMN

EDGARTOWN, July 20 - Mr Dominick Arena, the area's police chief, concluded that Senator Kennedy could not be held legally responsible for his Kopechne death after his examination of the car on the highway on Wednesday. This indicated that the driver had never attempted to brake the car but rather drove straight over the side, apparently in the belief that he was still on the road, Mr Arena said.

BMDs: 0171 680 6880 PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 9822 FAX: 0171 481 9313

BIRTHS MORGAN - On 14th July 1998 to Aly (nee Rubin) and Barry, a daughter, Georgia Jane.

DEATHS MELLORS - Julia Mary, died peacefully at home on 15th July 1998, aged 80. Burial at Holy Trinity Church, London N.W.8, on July 15th, aged 80 years.

ENHART - Dr. Alfred, dearly loved husband of Patricia, died peacefully at home on 15th July 1998, aged 80. Burial at Holy Trinity Church, London N.W.8, on July 15th, aged 80 years.

WARRICK - Stella Frances, died peacefully at home on 15th July 1998, aged 80. Burial at Holy Trinity Church, London N.W.8, on July 15th, aged 80 years.

KOK - Ann Townsend Kok, died peacefully at home on 15th July 1998, aged 80. Burial at Holy Trinity Church, London N.W.8, on July 15th, aged 80 years.

MARTIN - On 14th July at 2.00 pm, Family flowers only.

WALL - Professor Emeritus Ludia, widow of Jack, suddenly aged 71 on Wednesday 15th July.

WANDER - George Douglas, peacefully at home aged 81, greatly loved husband of Marie, devoted daddy of David, Peter, Penny & Ninesy. Much loved grandpa to his 11 grandchildren.

BIRTHS BARNON - On Friday, July 10th 1998, to the delight of Leini & John, a daughter, Louise Kathleen Newton.

DEATHS BLOOM - Peter Thomas, died peacefully after a short illness on 15th July, aged 78. Beloved husband of the late Margaret Blood.

HUTTON - Thomas James (Tom), peacefully at home, 19th July, in his 92nd year. Beloved husband of June and much loved father of Susan and Timothy.

MACDONALD - Alistair A., died peacefully at home, 15th July 1998. Deeply loved husband of Carolyn, father and loving father of Ian and Katrina, and loving grandfather of Ian and Hannah.

MARTIN - Ellen Bridget, died peacefully at home, 15th July 1998. Deeply loved wife of many friends. Funeral service at Leigh Church, July 28th at 2pm followed by cremation at Worth Crematorium. Donations in lieu of flowers to the Friends of the Church of St. Margaret, Regate Road, Redhill, Surrey for Marie Curie Foundation.

MORGAN-JONES - Captain David Gwynn, died peacefully on 15th July 1998. Much loved husband of Carolyn, father of Sophie and Emma, and grandfather of Jordan. Funeral service at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street at 12 noon Thursday 22nd July, followed by cremation. Family flowers only. Donations may be sent to The Injured Jockeys Fund or King's College Hospital, Liver Unit, Denmark Hill.

PRICE - Valmai Marjorie, died peacefully at home, 15th July 1998. Beloved mother of Christopher (Kit), Yolande, Jennifer and Jonathan. Aged 88, on 15th July 1998. Funeral at St. Mary the Virgin, Barkley, Gloucestershire on Wednesday 22nd July at 2.30 pm.

ROGERS - Noel Frederick on Saturday July 18th 1998 at Franklin House, West London. Music was his life.

DEATHS BARTON - On July 18th 1998 at home to Nicola (nee Morda) and Roger, a daughter, Gemma Sarah Margaret, a sister for Oliver, Thomas and Melissa.

DEATHS DOUGLAS - Phyllis, passed peacefully at home on Sunday 12th July 98. Will be sadly missed by her family and many friends. Funeral to be held at West Crematorium, Watford, on Wednesday 22nd July at 11.00 am. All welcome. Donations in lieu of flowers to Age Concern or to the Cancer Research Campaign, c/o Coughlin Brothers Funeral Service, 1, Southfield, Watney Garden City, AL7 4ST. Tel: 01177 225959.

HARDING - Len, Rotarian, formerly of Crouchfields, Hertford, passed away suddenly on 14th July at his home in Reading. Much loved husband to Paddy, father to Jane, Gillian and Sally and grandfather to George, Harriet, Thomas, Lily and Liam. The funeral service will be held at St Andrew's Church, Sonning at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 22nd July. Flowers to be sent to A B Walker & Son Limited, Reading. Tel: 0118 957 3850.

HAWKING - John Philip PhD, died peacefully at home on 14th July at the age of 82. He leaves his children, Elizabeth and Martin, grandchildren Jean and Sandra, Jason and Sasha and his great-granddaughter Hannah. His sense of humor and kindness will be missed by all who knew him.

MACDONALD - Alistair A., died peacefully at home, 15th July 1998. Deeply loved husband of Carolyn, father and loving father of Ian and Katrina, and loving grandfather of Ian and Hannah. Formerly Sheriff of Orkney and Shetland. Funeral at Lerwick in St. Margaret's Roman Catholic Church 12 noon Tuesday 21st July.

MARTIN - On 14th July at 2.00 pm, Family flowers only.

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WANDER - George Douglas, peacefully at home aged 81, greatly loved husband of Marie, devoted daddy of David, Peter, Penny & Ninesy. Much loved grandpa to his 11 grandchildren. Funeral service at St. Nicholas Church, Redcliffe on Tuesday 22nd July 10.30 am. Family flowers. Donations in lieu of flowers to the Friends of St. Nicholas Redcliffe on Tuesday 22nd July 10.30 am. Family flowers. Donations in lieu of flowers to the Friends of St. Nicholas Redcliffe on Tuesday 22nd July 10.30 am.

DEATHS EDWARDS - On 10th July 1998 to Nicholas and Kate (nee Keel) a son, Angus James Alexander.

DEATHS FAGAN - On Sunday 12th July 1998 to Sarah (nee Vockler) and Jamie, a son, Hugh.

DEATHS HUTTON - Thomas James (Tom), peacefully at home, 19th July, in his 92nd year. Beloved husband of June and much loved father of Susan and Timothy.

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DEATHS MCKEE - At Altonage, Londonbury on 12th July to Claire (nee Wilson) and Leslie, a son, Lewis Miles, a brother for Connor.

DEATHS HUTTON - Thomas James (Tom), peacefully at home, 19th July, in his 92nd year. Beloved husband of June and much loved father of Susan and Timothy.

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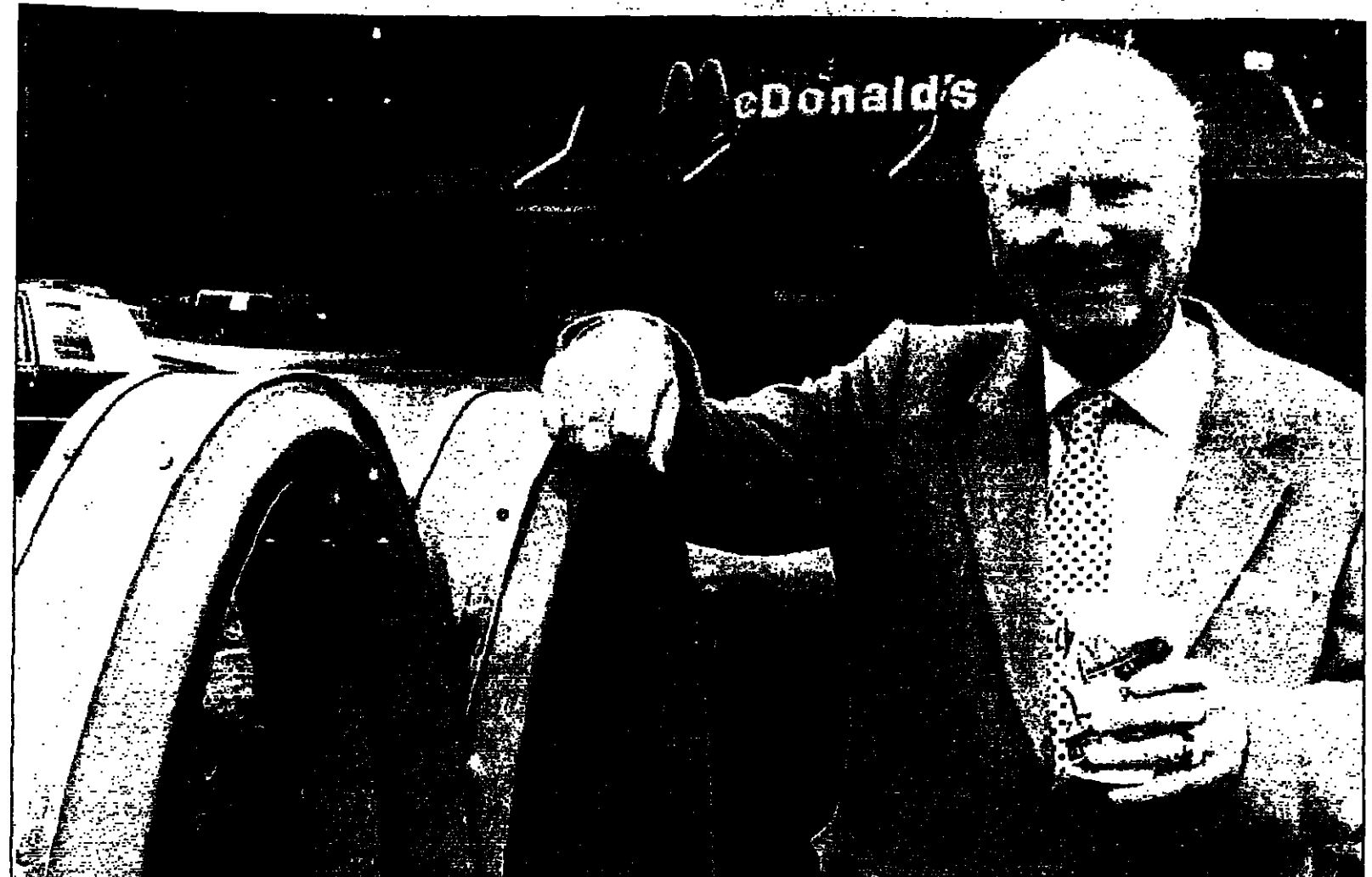
ROGERS - Noel Frederick on Saturday July 18th 1998 at Franklin House, West London. Music was his life.

OBITUARIES

DICK McDONALD

Richard McDonald, co-founder of McDonald's, died on July 14 in Manchester, New Hampshire, aged 89. He was born in New Hampshire on February 16, 1909.

Dick McDonald left a dual, enduring legacy to the fast food industry which he had pioneered. The first was his name, a word that today is synonymous in any language with the classic American hamburger. The second was a madcap design for golden arches in the shape of a stunted letter "M" to sit atop the roof of his drive-through restaurant.



Dick McDonald, photographed in 1991 beside the "golden arches" of a restaurant in his home town, Manchester, New Hampshire

Richard McDonald was born in Manchester, New Hampshire, and migrated with his brother Maurice (known as Mac) to California in the late 1920s. The brothers had only one ambition, which was to make \$1 million by the time they were 50. Initially it did not appear that this dream would be fulfilled. Both brothers found jobs in the Hollywood film industry, but the work held little promise of real success.

The menu and preparing food in advance, so as to speed up service and sales. To this end they installed a mechanised kitchen and erected the striking golden arches on the roof of their building to draw the attention of passing cars — and so the modern fast food restaurant was born.

self) with creating the global McDonald's empire. Kroc was soon doing brisk business with the McDonald brothers, who made the milkshakes in all of their outlets with his patented Multimixer machines, which were capable of producing several shakes at once.

Des Plaines, Illinois: it still exists today, preserved as a museum, with everything just as it was on the day it opened in April 1955. Takings on that first day were \$366.12. By 1961 Kroc was doing well enough from his franchises to purchase the whole business outright.

the menu needs no real translation, and the formula is always instantly recognisable wherever it is encountered. The company is now thought to be the world's biggest single supplier of food, with sales of some \$33 billion per year.

first outlet in Des Plaines. Dick McDonald was always surprised that such an extraordinary worldwide phenomenon could have grown from a modest drive-by burger joint in San Bernardino, and he was irritated at the lack of credit given to him and his brother Mac.

RICHARD BERENS

Richard Berens, chief press officer for the All England Tennis Club and former William Hickey of the Daily Express, died of cancer on July 8 aged 65. He was born on February 13, 1933.

RICHARD BERENS ruled the roost in the press office of the All England Press Club for nearly 15 years, acting as gatekeeper to innumerable claimants for press credentials from all over the world. He it was who decided — handing down irrevocable decisions in the earriest of language — who should, and who should not, qualify for passes.

and Benworth Hall in Hampshire. At Eton, he discovered two passions: for drawing (he won the Harmsworth Drawing Prize) and for horse racing, the latter pursuit lasting a lifetime. As an owner he had two useful horses, Happy Abbot and Jave River, trained by the former champion jockey Stan L. Mellor. He also enjoyed a flutter.

He was quite fearless in answering for the club when questions were raised as to the qualifications of various occupants of the Royal Box. On one occasion, when asked by a newspaper why Sir Robin Day had been accorded this privilege, he replied, to the grand interrogator's considerable irritation, that Day came under the heading "show-business personality".

Berens was very much in the tradition of the upper-class gossip writer — more than willing, at least in matters of trivia, to betray his Old Etonian and country house friends. He was a boulevardier journalist in a Fleet Street which, it seemed to him, quite suddenly disappeared, spiritually as well as physically, with the diaspora to Doclands and elsewhere.

Richard Wilfred Beauvoir Berens, the son of a director of Hambro's Bank, was brought up at the two family homes, Kevington in Kent (he once named a horse Man of Kent) and a stepson.



Berens discovered his lifelong passion for horse racing while at Eton, and later became an owner

PROFESSOR RACHEL ROSSER

Professor Rachel Rosser, psychiatrist, died in an accident at home on July 10 aged 56. She was born on October 9, 1941.

RACHEL ROSSER was one of the leading practitioners in the psychiatric treatment of stress after disasters. Her appointment on television after the fire at King's Cross station in 1987 helped to educate the public about the psychological problems that can be suffered after such events, of which there was such an appalling spate during the 1980s.

working during the war. Twice they lost their home through bombing, and she vividly remembered the experience of the Blitz. Yet, despite the family's deep poverty, Rosser was well educated, thanks to a series of state scholarships. A highly academic girl, she went to King's High School, Warwick, where she excelled, and from there to Newnham College, Cambridge, as a scholar reading natural sciences, in which she took a first.



Royal College of Psychiatry in 1974. In 1980 she was awarded a PhD by London University for a remarkable analytical thesis on the severity of illness and evaluation of the outcome of hospital care.

had pioneered quality-of-life assessments. Her knowledge of medicine and psychiatry led to the establishment of liaison psychiatry at Charing Cross Hospital, where she was a reader, and then at University College, where she became professor and head of the department of psychiatry in 1984, when she was also made a fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatry.

In her clinical work Rachel Rosser often helped to ease the suffering of patients when other doctors had all-but given up. She was deeply versed in pharmacology and psychotherapy, having developed her skills with the help of a personal analysis. These several disciplines, and her strong personality, combined to bring remarkable benefits to many of her patients.

the way victims should be treated, and about the impact on healers. Rosser was always conscious of the limits of conventional medicine. She took early retirement from University College London to explore new ideas. She was planning a research unit in Norwich, to explore the claims of multi-faith health and healing, and establish where benefits could best be achieved.

MILESTONES



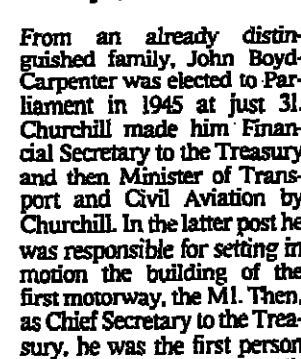
Octav Botnar, former chairman of Nissan UK, died on July 11 aged 84. He was born on October 21, 1913.

In 1970, Octav Botnar, who had grown up mainly in Romania, took over the franchise for Datsun cars in Britain. Only 1,200 of the cars had been imported in the previous year, but by pricing them cheaply and offering good, reliable service through his AFC chain of dealers, he built up a business with 7 per cent of the British market by the mid-1980s.



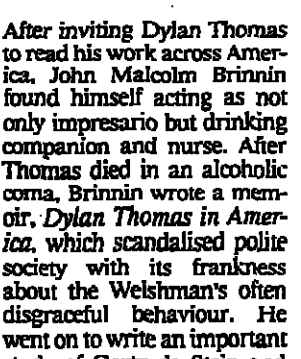
Beryl Bryden, jazz singer and musician, died on July 14 aged 78. She was born on May 11, 1920.

bral and ironic poetry reached a Western audience when Penguin published his Selected Poems in 1967. His verse is elaborate, impersonal, and sludged with images from Holub's other life — as a scientist. For he also had a distinguished career as a research immunologist. His Collected Poems finally appeared in Czechoslovakia after the fall of Communism. Obituary published on July 16.



Lord Boyd-Carpenter, former Chief Secretary to the Treasury, died on July 11 aged 90. He was born on January 2, 1908.

From an already distinguished family, John Boyd-Carpenter was elected to Parliament in 1945 at just 31. Churchill made him Financial Secretary to the Treasury and then Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation by Churchill. In the latter post he was responsible for setting in motion the building of the first motorway, the M1. Then, as Chief Secretary to the Treasury, he was the first person to see the proposed expenditure figures for the development of Concorde in 1962.



John Malcolm Brinnin, American critic and biographer, died on June 26 aged 81. He was born on September 13, 1916.

After inviting Dylan Thomas to read his work across America, John Malcolm Brinnin found himself acting as not only impresario but drinking companion and nurse. After Thomas died in an alcoholic coma, Brinnin wrote a memoir, Dylan Thomas in America, which scandalised polite society with its frankness about the Welshman's often disgraceful behaviour. He went on to write an important study of Gertrude Stein and about several of his other famous literary friends, including Truman Capote. A teacher at Harvard and elsewhere, Brinnin, who lived with Bill Read until his death in 1978, was a frequent passenger on transatlantic liners, and wrote two books about them. Obituary published on July 15.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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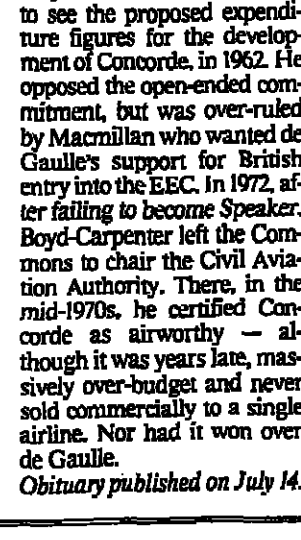
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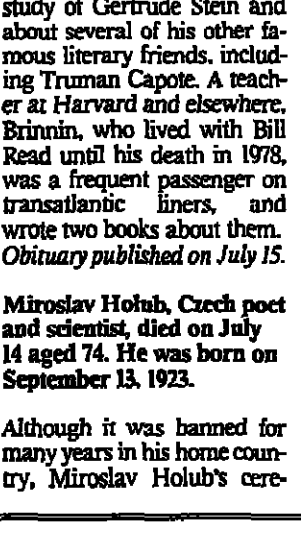
PERSONAL COLUMN... 0171-680 4678 OR FAX: 0171 481 9213



Miroslav Holub, Czech poet and scientist, died on July 14 aged 74. He was born on September 13, 1923.



John Malcolm Brinnin, American critic and biographer, died on June 26 aged 81. He was born on September 13, 1916.



Beryl Bryden, jazz singer and musician, died on July 14 aged 78. She was born on May 11, 1920.



Octav Botnar, former chairman of Nissan UK, died on July 11 aged 84. He was born on October 21, 1913.

Equities firmer at the close

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table of equity prices for various sectors including Alcoholic Beverages, Banks, Breweries, Pubs & Rest, Building Materials, Electricity, Electronic & Elect, Chemicals, Construction, and Distributors.

Table of equity prices for Engineering, Vehicles, and Investment Trusts.

Table of equity prices for Food Manufacturers and Healthcare.

Table of equity prices for Household Goods & Text.

Table of equity prices for Leisure & Hotels.

Table of equity prices for Insurance.

Table of equity prices for Media.

Table of equity prices for Mining.

Table of equity prices for Oil & Gas.

Table of equity prices for British Funds.

Table of equity prices for Longs (over 15 years) and Undated.

Table of equity prices for Mediums (5 to 15 years) and Index-linked on proposed inflation rate.

Table of equity prices for Other Financial.

Table of equity prices for Pharmaceuticals.

Table of equity prices for Printing & Paper.

Table of equity prices for Property.

Table of equity prices for Telecommunications.

Table of equity prices for Transport.

Table of equity prices for Water.

Table of equity prices for Retailers, Food, and Retailers, General.

Advertisement for Lexus Succession, featuring the text 'THE BENCHMARK FOR LUXURY USED CARS £299 A MONTH' and 'Every Lexus Succession used car comes with an unmatched 3 year unlimited mileage warranty'.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, possibly a page number or reference.

Handwritten text at the bottom center of the page, possibly a signature or note.

23 PROFILE 26 Top promoters join forces for a City show

BUSINESS

WEEKEND MONEY SECTION 2

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY JULY 18 1998

U-turn halts tax on pension offshore bonds

THOUSANDS of pensioners with millions of pounds in offshore portfolio bonds will now escape a proposed 15 per cent tax charge following a Government climbdown on the Finance Bill.

However, The Times revealed that the proposed rules also included bonds that had been taken out by people living abroad, who are excluded from contributing to pension schemes in the UK.

MPs seek more private sector members on MPC

By ALASDAIR MURRAY ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE Government has been urged to appoint more members with private sector experience to the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee.

led to accusations from business groups such as the British Chambers of Commerce that the membership is too heavily biased towards academics who lack experience of the "real world".

accepted the argument of Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, that there was no point in installing businessmen who lack "the right sort of specialist expertise in monetary policy".

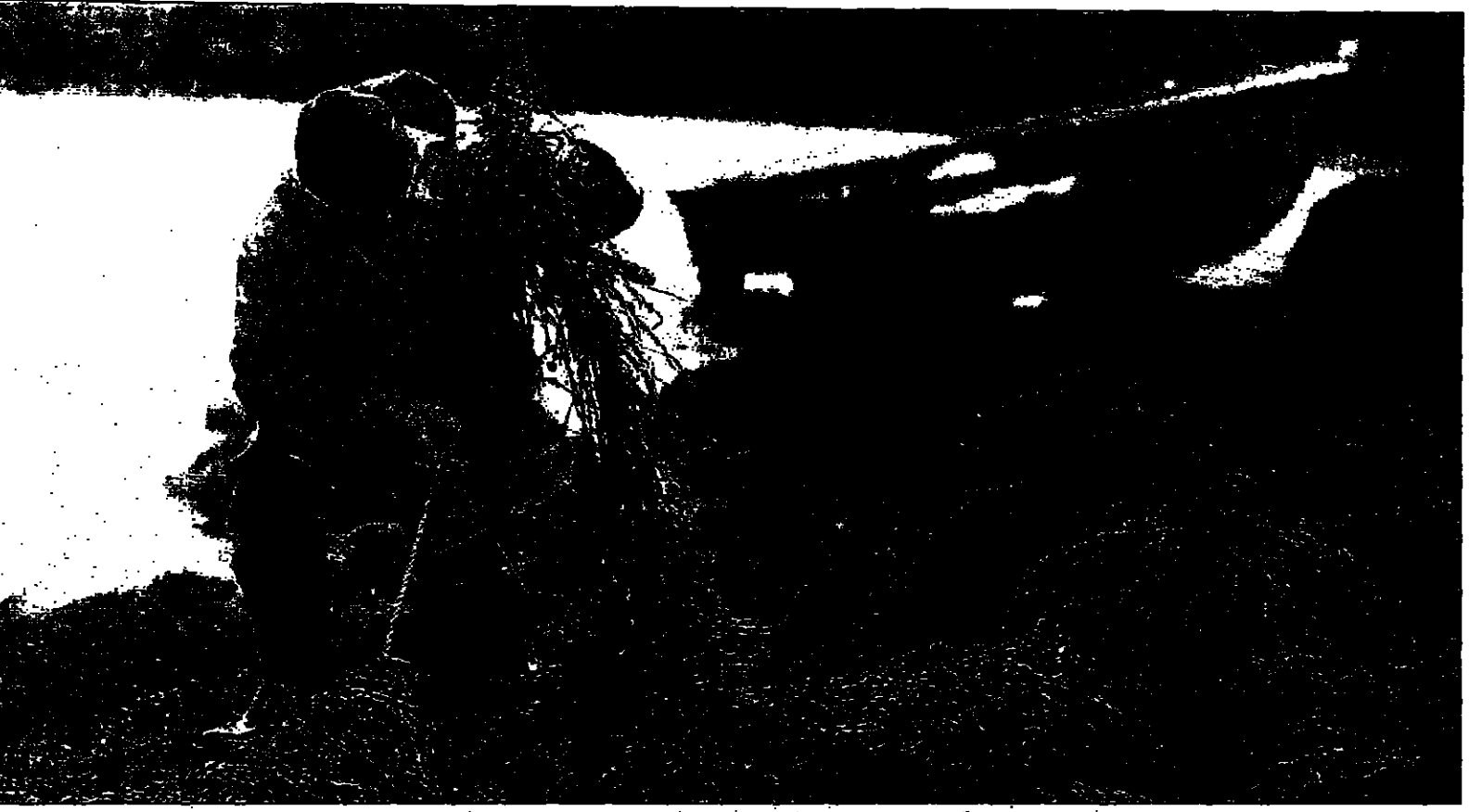
The Select Committee wants the Bank, the Treasury and the Office for National Statistics to consider the quality of the private sector earnings data.

Midland staff to sue over HSBC options

By RICHARD MILES BANKING CORRESPONDENT

MIDLAND BANK is being sued in the High Court by more than 100 employees in a dispute over share options worth about £1 million.

The employees allege they missed out on substantial gains because Midland failed to alert them to changes to the share option scheme following the bank's acquisition by HSBC Holdings in 1992.



All washed up: The merger of Monsanto and American Home Products has put Uist seaweed harvesters like Alastair Johnston, above, out of business

Tide turns for Hebridean kelp cutters

By FRASER NELSON

CROFTERS who have spent their lives collecting seaweed from the shores of the Uist islands in the Outer Hebrides face redundancy following the \$100 billion (£59 billion) merger of two US biotech companies.

Home Products have told 35 seaweed harvesters that their wet kelp is a luxury the enlarged company can no longer afford.

islanders believe its parent company has found cheaper kelp in Peru.

Don McPhee, one of the islanders, says he has been contacted by international food companies who fetch £5,000 per tonne for table-ready red algae against the £15 a tonne paid for wet kelp.

Keico's withdrawal will come as a blow to the sixth Earl Granville, the Queen's godson. He is the official overlord of most of North Uist, and has been using his feudal rights to tax the seaweed.

Film chiefs pan US appointment

By CHRIS AYRES

A FRESH attempt by the Government to nurture Britain's creative industries appeared to have backfired last night, when film industry executives said the appointment of a 66-year-old "film tsar" would give the country a "fuddy-duddy" image.

Nomura among Thistle bidders

By DOMINIC WALSH

NOMURA International, the Japanese-owned securities house, is among the front-runners to buy Thistle Hotels, the UK's second-biggest hotel operator.

it's tax free (but it's not a PEP or a TESSA)

With a Family Bond you can save an additional £25 a month free of income or capital gains tax.

A WEEK IN THE CITY

After five weeks of being glued to the World Cup, the communal sense of deflation in the Square Mile was almost audible. What on earth were we going to do now that it was all over?

role in England's early exit. JD Wetherspoon lost some of its froth thanks to its TV-free policy.

to be suspended pending the results of an inquiry. Balancing the books has also been taxing the mind of Gordon Brown, who on Tuesday dramatically released the brake on spending by announcing an extra £40 billion for health and education over the next three years.

see-sawing on world markets. Inevitably, experts were split over the implications. Some predicted the badly needed overhaul of the ailing Japanese economy would have to be put on hold; others hoped it would pave the way for the appointment of somebody better-equipped to play the role of saviour.

Advertisement for Family Assurance Friendly Society, featuring a large graphic of a family and text describing the benefits of a Family Bond, including tax-free savings and investment options.

Table titled 'BUSINESS TODAY' containing various financial indices and market data, including FTSE 100, DAX, Nikkei, and various bond yields.

GEC setback: GEC shares fell yesterday after the collapse of the Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman merger...

Slipped discs: EMI, the troubled British music group behind bands such as The Verve and the Spice Girls, yesterday admitted that it would be "difficult" to match the success of last year's best-selling albums...

Sears protest: The board of Sears received a two-hour roasting from shareholders yesterday for the retail group's share price performance, directors' pay and the timing of the demerger of Selfridges...

Form for requesting more information on Family Assurance Friendly Society, including fields for name, address, and telephone number.

Highgate poised to buy four Granada hotels

By Dominic Walsh

HIGHGATE HOLDINGS, a property investment firm based in Dallas, is the latest US investor to target the UK hotel market. The Times understands that Highgate is poised to buy four hotels from Granada — three of them in London — for more than £150 million.

It is thought to be buying the hotels in two separate deals. The first, for about £140 million, is for three four-star properties in Central London, the Russell, the Cavendish and the Saint-George's, which have a combined total of 670 bedrooms. The sale of the hotels, which were put on the market earlier this year for about £150 million, is still at an early stage of negotiations. The other deal involves the Hôtel de la Tourville in Paris, part of the Forte Exclusive chain put up for sale in the wake of Granada's £3.9 billion takeover of Forte in January 1996. This deal is believed to be further advanced, with Highgate having already exchanged contracts to buy the 107-room hotel for about £12 million.

Highgate, which is controlled by its president, Mahmood Khimji, is a shareholder in CapStar Hotel Company, based in Washington DC, which recently announced plans to merge with American General Hospitality, a US real estate investment trust (REIT). It has extensive hotel interests in the US and Canada, all of which are branded and managed by third parties. The same pattern will be followed in Europe, with specialist operators appointed to manage the four properties under recognised brands.

Highgate is the latest in a long line of US predators targeting UK hotels. The Savoy Group, Cliveden and Arcadian International have all been sold to US companies in recent months, and Thistle Hotels is thought to have attracted US interest.

Antoine Cau, recently appointed chief executive of Forte Hotels, has reorganised the company into four divisions based on its brands: Posthouse, Heritage, Le Méridien and London Signature Hotels.



Ian Blackburn, left, and Fresh-Pak's managing director, Mike Saunders, believe the deal will create European opportunities

Perkins pays £14.7m for Fresh-Pak

By George Sivell

PERKINS FOODS went back on the acquisition trail yesterday by taking over Fresh-Pak Chilled Foods in a deal worth up to £14.7 million.

Fresh-Pak's products include sandwich and snack fillings sold to supermarkets, caterers and food manufacturers. The company was set up 12 years ago in Loughborough to make egg products.

Perkins, which manufactures and distributes a wide range of foods, makes the bulk of its sales on the Continent and hailed the deal as good news.

Ian Blackburn, Perkins chief executive, said: "There are opportunities within the growing European chilled foods market for Perkins Foods to benefit from Fresh-Pak's product innovation."

In the year to May 2 Fresh-Pak made a pre-tax profit of £1.4 million on £20.1 million turnover. Perkins shares rose 7p to 158p yesterday.

GEC hit as merger of US aerospace duo is scuppered

By Adam Jones and Oliver August

GEC shares fell yesterday after the collapse of the Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman merger was seen as damaging to its US expansion plans, despite suggestions on Wall Street that Northrop is now more likely to look for an overseas partner.

GEC had talked to the two US aerospace and defence companies in the hope that they would have to sell businesses to satisfy US regulators opposed to the merger.

In particular, GEC wanted the defence electronics arm of Northrop, which would be a logical fit for GEC-Marconi. Both companies are active in airborne radar and electronic counter measures.

On Thursday night, however, Lockheed said it had abandoned the merger plans

just hours after the Pentagon said it was unable to work out an agreement to modify the deal and that it would press on with a lawsuit filed in March to block the merger.

Yesterday, GEC shares fell 11p to 525p. However, Wall Street analysts believe that Northrop will be under pressure to seek new alliances with European companies, reviving the hopes of both GEC and BAe, which had also been tracking the merger progress.

BAe partners Lockheed on the Joint Strike Fighter project and Northrop on the Astor radar project.

James McAleese, an independent US defence analyst, said: "Northrop will be virtually crippled and hardly capable of competing with Raytheon on the electronics side, let

alone with Boeing or Lockheed on the aircraft platform."

Any transatlantic link would still have to overcome the Pentagon's unwillingness to deal with foreign contractors on secret projects.

Michael Blegg, an analyst at Charterhouse, Tilney, said GEC will continue to look for smaller US defence companies.

Vance Coffman, Lockheed Martin chairman, said: "Continuing the litigation at this point is simply not in the best interests of Lockheed Martin's customers, shareholders or employees."

Ken Kress, chief executive of Northrop, said: "While we believed the merger was in the best interests of our constituents, Northrop Grumman can and will continue as a strong, independent marketplace."

American deficit mounts as Asia damages exports

By Alasdair Murray, Economics Correspondent

THE US trade deficit hit a record \$15.75 billion in May as the Asian financial crisis continued to hamper the country's exporting performance.

US exports dropped by 1.3 per cent to their lowest level for over a year while imports, sucked in by the robust consumer sector, increased by 0.5 per cent.

However, the politically sensitive deficit with Japan actually narrowed by 8.5 per cent to \$4.95 billion. In contrast, the deficit with China increased to \$4.63 billion, nearly a quarter higher than at the same point last year.

The US figures came as Japan's new Financial Supervisory Agency revealed for the first time the extent of the country's bad loan problem.

Japan's 19 leading banks had 45.4 trillion yen (£98 billion) of class two questionable loans at the end of March. They also possessed a

further 6.9 trillion yen (£30 billion) of class three loans — defined as being where debtors are suffering considerable difficulties but are in no immediate danger of collapse.

Analysts said the figures were marginally smaller than expected but it was years before the banks cleaned up their loan books.

Seiroku Kajiyama, the veteran Liberal Democratic party politician who is a front runner to become Prime Minister, said he wanted to oblige banks to set aside loan loss reserves but gave no detailed proposals on the quotas.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei closed down nearly 1 per cent at 16,570.78 as uncertainty about the next Prime Minister clouded the market. Other Asian markets enjoyed strong gains, buoyed by the yen which held firm on the foreign exchanges at about 140 to the dollar.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Rolfe & Nolan slips after reporting loss

SHARES in Rolfe & Nolan fell from 317.5p to 285p after the software and support services provider revealed a loss in the year to February 28 and a slow start to the current year. The year to February 28 and a slow start to the current year. The company plans to sell its capital markets division to IQ Financial Systems of the US for an agreed minimum of £4.6 million, payable over four years. The division's losses had increased from £910,000 last year to £3.37 million. In futures and options the group won new contracts but profits fell from £3.55 million to £3.46 million.

In April, it gave warning that delayed contracts and the costs associated with a bid from US rival SunGuard Data Systems would hit results. Including exceptional, pre-tax losses for the year to February 28 were £890,000 against a profit of £2.76 million the previous year, on sales up seven per cent to £21.7 million. Losses per share were 10.2p against earnings of 14.5p last year. No final dividend will be added to the 1.7p paid at the half year, compared to 5.5p for the previous year. For the current year, house broker Greig Middleton is predicting breakeven at the half year and pre-tax profits of £2 million for the full year.

BSkyB in Italia talks

BRITISH SKY BROADCASTING has had preliminary talks with Telecom Italia about the possibility of taking a 40 per cent stake in Stream, its cable and satellite subsidiary, the Italian press reported. It is believed that BSkyB, a company in which News International, the owner of The Times, has a 40 per cent stake, has had only one meeting with the Italian company. BSkyB said yesterday that as a major European television company "it considered a range of European media opportunities".

Nationwide extension

AHEAD of its annual meeting next Thursday, Nationwide is extending the deadline for those wishing to vote in its branches. Members wishing to register their views for or against the demutualisation of the society can now complete forms in branches until the close of business on Monday. The previous closing date was today. Some members complained that they did not receive forms allowing them to make postal votes. Saving and borrowing members are also being asked to elect directors for the society. Weekend Money, page 56

Addidas signs two clubs

ADDIDAS-SALOMON said it had won sponsorship contracts for two of the world's best-known football clubs, Real Madrid and AC Milan. Adidas, which makes a range of sports clothing and equipment, will supply kit and other merchandise for the clubs. The contract with Real Madrid is for ten years and six years with AC Milan. Financial details were not disclosed. Adidas had sponsored AC Milan between 1990 and 1993, but more recently the club had a contract with Lotto. Real Madrid's contract was with Kelme.

Waste Recycling to grow

WASTE RECYCLING GROUP heralded an increase in size as it revealed it was in talks which may or may not lead to a "substantial" acquisition. The group, which collects and recycles domestic and industrial waste and operates landfill sites, said it had been forced to reveal its intentions earlier than planned after an unexpected jump in its share price. The shares yesterday rose 22p to 493p. David Williams, the chairman, said he hoped to reveal details of the proposed acquisition within the next few weeks. Tempus, page 27

Record high for Volvo

SHARES in Volvo, the Swedish carmaker that has been in co-operation talks with Volkswagen, temporarily hit a record level of Kr280 (£21.54) yesterday morning. The shares were responding to Thursday's strong first-half profits. Although Volvo has admitted meeting VW, talk of a merger is premature, a source close to the companies said. VW's interest in Volvo is thought to centre on its trucks business. There has also been speculation of a merger between Renault and VW, although this would face considerable opposition in France.

Man U trounces Italy

REVENUE at Manchester United, the publicly quoted football club, is nearly as much as the combined total of the two most powerful clubs in Italy, Juventus and Inter Milan. A survey by Deloitte & Touche, the accountants, said United's annual revenue was £87.9 million compared with £51.9 million at Juventus and £38.1 million at Inter Milan. The Old Trafford club's merchandise sales accounted for £46.3 million at AC Milan and £27.9 million at Parma.

Aortech blames delays

AORTECH International, the heart valve maker, yesterday blamed disappointing results on delays in testing its new products and on the strength of sterling. It said surgeons' tests on its Ultracon mechanical heart valve had been delayed, hindering sales. The group lost £594,042 in the year to March 31, an improvement on £1.1 million the previous year. The shares rose 2p to 104p. Losses per share fell from 8.1p to 3.5p. No dividends have been paid or proposed for the year.

Radius in £15m buyout

RADIUS, the computer services group, is to be sold to a management buyout for £15.4 million or 55p a share. Radius shares rose 10p to 52p. The company said the offer would provide certainty to shareholders at a time when it had continued to report disappointing results. Profits for last year fell from £1.6 million to £1.1 million. Radius was formed in 1976 and is one of the oldest software companies, focussing on systems for medium to large retailers, printing and packaging firms and local government.

Pru raises its stake in Bluewater complex

By Carl Mortished

PRUDENTIAL has bought a one-fifth share in the Bluewater shopping centre, from Lend Lease, the Australian property investment company. For an undisclosed sum the Pru has taken its stake in the 1.7 million sq ft retail and leisure park to 35 per cent and retains an option to take it to 50 per cent.

Bluewater, in northwest Kent near the M25 and A2, is due to open in March. Lend Lease puts a completion value on Bluewater of £1.1 billion, which suggests a price of £220 million for the Prudential's 20 per cent purchase.

The centre is 93 per cent let with John Lewis and Marks & Spencer as anchor tenants. Lend Lease expects 30 million shoppers every year, spending £650 million, although the centre must compete with its rival across the Thames in Essex — Capital Shopping Centres Lakeside centre at Thurrock.

Bluewater was built at a cost of £350 million on a quarry owned by Blue Circle, near the site of the proposed Channel Tunnel rail link station at Ebbsfleet.

Unilever fund goes for higher risk plan

By Richard Miles

UK PENSION funds want to invest more of their members' money in private equity, traditionally a high-risk sector where many investors made heavy losses in the early 1980s.

Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch ice cream and detergents group, has already earmarked £200 million for investment in private equity through a diversified portfolio of venture capital funds. Other large funds are believed to be considering following in its footsteps.

This represents 5 per cent of Unilever's £4 billion pension fund compared with an 0.8 per cent average investment by the UK pensions industry. The British Venture Capital Association, which represents private equity firms, says the sector now has more than a ten-year record of returns that have often outshone conventional equity markets.

However, UK pension funds face technical deterrents to investing in private equity, not least the minimum funding requirement. Under MFR rules, private equity is not deemed a separate asset class and cannot be used to offset any investor liabilities.

Names face upset over £127m Kiln merger

By Adam Jones

THE growth of mini-insurance companies at Lloyd's of London continued yesterday after a merger was proposed between RJ Kiln, the underwriter, and Kiln Capital, the quoted fund that supplies capital to syndicates.

If it goes through, the deal, which is likely to create a £127-£139 million group, will anger names who fear Lloyd's is becoming a federation of integrated insurance firms.

The names, many of whom continue to underwrite with unlimited liability despite the catastrophic losses of the late Eighties and early Nineties, claim that corporate backing

means a loss of flexibility and innovation.

The merger is being structured as a buyout of Kiln Capital by Kiln plc, the employee-owned company behind RJ Kiln. Kiln Capital shareholders will be offered 1.192 shares in the merged group for every 1,000 shares they hold.

The new group will try to raise £50 million through a placing and offer of shares at between 130p and 150p each.

The business underwritten by Kiln includes life cover, non-marine catastrophe re-insurance and motor and aviation risks.

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.69	2.81
Austria Sch	21.82	19.88
Belgium Fr	65.80	58.64
Canada C\$	2.577	2.577
Cyprus Cyp£	0.304	0.332
Denmark Kr	11.76	10.87
Egypt Pound	5.79	5.18
Finland Mk	8.48	8.71
France Fr	10.51	10.51
Germany Dm	3.10	2.88
Hong Kong \$	12.57	12.53
Indonesia Rp	129	109
Israel NIS	1.12	1.13
Italy Lit	0.26	0.27
Japan Yen	243.26	227.75
Malaysia M\$	0.676	0.817
New Zealand \$	3.493	3.203
Norway Kr	3.34	3.00
Portugal Esc	12.87	12.87
Spain Ptas	312.40	281.27
Switzerland Fr	10.98	10.00
Sweden Kr	203.22	191.52
Switzerland Fr	13.81	12.71
Taiwan NT\$	2.62	2.41
Thailand Baht	46.4540	42.611
USA \$	1.747	1.604

THE SUNDAY TIMES

BROWN'S GAMBLE

Gordon Brown seemed Big Business's idea of the perfect chancellor, preaching prudence, restraint and fiscal responsibility. But the plans for big increases in government spending have caused the City to take fright. Gordon the great has become Gordon the gambler

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CHANGING TIMES

150 من الأهل

Lord Simpson's novel approach



COMMENTARY by our City Editor

The book shops at any respectable airport are full of thrillers with excitable names like *The Donoghue Dilemma* or *The Cunningham Conspiracy*. These often involve a multinational arms company, striving for world domination, a move that is then thwarted by a dashing hero, fighting against the power of the Pentagon establishment.

The latest imprint, *The Simpson Start-up*, casts Joel Klein, the US Assistant Attorney-General for anti-trust, as the male lead, single-handedly blocking the \$11 billion (£6.7 billion) merger between Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, which would have created a world dominating defence company. The unwitting result of his actions will be to deliver Lord Simpson of Dunkeld from making a strategic error that might have ruined the honeymoon he has enjoyed since becoming managing director of GEC.

For Lord Simpson was eagerly awaiting the fall-out from Lockheed Northrop (or was it Martin Grumman) deal, to see what businesses would have to be put on the block to appease Mr Klein. Under the brilliant John Mayo, brought over from Zeneca to finance director, GEC's byzantine financial structure was revamped, leaving the company in the position of being able to access £4 billion of cash without having to break into a sweat. Bidding for Northrop might be a

little too much for GEC to contemplate at the moment, and with only relatively small deals in the US to distract it, the company is no doubt turning its big guns eastward, across the English Channel.

There is a good argument to say that is where it should have been aiming all along. GEC's arch-rival, British Aerospace, decided quite a while ago that the main game at the moment was the shake-out of the European defence industry. It has dedicated its top brains, Sir Richard Evans and Richard Lapthorne, to concentrating entirely on securing for BAe a tasty slice of any carve-up. The Italians, Germans, Spanish and Swedes all seem keen to join the party. Only the French, inevitably, are unwilling to contemplate any alliance that does not put their companies in pole position.

GEC's interest in the US is understandable, but appears to be more opportunistic than the BAe strategy. Buying companies in the US — even accepting the attentions of Joel Klein — is a far easier task than trying to unravel the myriad connections of a formerly state-owned Italian defence contractor. But the long haul that led to the creation of a

profitable, successful and ultimately flammable Airbus Industrie, shows that the rewards available within Europe could be much higher.

Joel Klein, a role crying out for Tom Cruise or David Duchovny to play in the film version, looks like having done Lord Simpson a great service, though he will not see it this way at the moment. But the GEC boss should realise that these thrillers always have a happy ending.

A short time in monetary policy

You cannot blame the Treasury Select Committee for wanting to have it both ways. Regrettably, that is often the only realistic way to achieve consensus. But it does make its report on the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee sound like a random whinge. First, Giles Radice and his

colleagues warn the MPC that they may take it to task for not raising interest rates between November and June. That would look pretty bad if the Bank thereby missed its basic objective of keeping the targeted definition of inflation near to 2.5 per cent.

Then the MPC query whether there might be too many academic economists on the MPC and not enough people with genuine industrial experience. Absolutely old boy. We need chaps who know what it is really like on the coalface. Such arguments always go down well.

The drawback is that DeAnne Julius, the sole MPC member with industrial experience outside the City, voted more consistently against a base rate rise than anyone else. Indeed, she voted to cut rates in May and June. Nor was her lonely stance necessarily wrong.

Had there been more experts from industry, base rates might not have risen even in June.

What might MPs have made of that? Logically, the Select Committee cannot yet bring the MPC to task because it accepts Eddie George's contention that responsibility for today's inflation does not lie with an MPC formed only last summer. It dates back to the fun music-hall days of the Ken and Eddie show. In the theory of these monetary arrangements, the consequences of what the MPC did not do in the spring will not be known until the next millennium.

Somehow you cannot see the MPs being so patient. And they have some excuse for jumping the gun. The MPC itself does not seem to be looking so far ahead as it claims. Rather, it seems to be looking at current inflation and current economic statistics and projecting them forward.

By its own timetable, the MPC does not seem to have allowed the rate rises of last year to work their soothing magic on an overheating economy. It should

only raise rates this summer if the figures coming out now, for instance on average earnings, are significantly higher than the MPC projected before its previous set of rate rises.

The European Central Bank's Wim Duisenberg, who plans to issue minutes after 16 years rather than six weeks, seems less likely to be panicked.

Share buybacks all the rage

A few years ago *Vogue* produced a book on how to look stylish on a tight budget. It was called "More dash than cash". However, large swathes of European industry seem to be suffering from a problem that *Vogue* would probably describe as "More cash than dash". They are throwing off masses of money, but are not sure how to spend it.

The phenomenon indicates the dilemma of the low inflation, low growth era that much of Europe has created for itself by trying to follow the German economic model. With the Far East suffering a Ronaldo-esque fit, European companies are wary of investing in the tiger economies

and few other parts of the world look like good homes for their money.

They could indulge in a little intra-European consolidation — which is what the likes of ABN Amro and Volkswagen have been enjoying. But according to the analysts at Salomon Smith Barney, what they should be doing is buying back their shares, which is just what some groups have done recently.

Now there may be some tax problems — just ask Reuters — but according to the brokers buybacks create their own virtuous circle, pushing up earnings per share, dividend yields and share prices, so allowing the companies to use their shares to fund purchases if they then need money. The sectors where companies have the most excess cash look to be banking, insurance and chemicals. More buybacks than dash it seems.

Rebranding

IF British Energy is successful in its New England nuclear bid, the Americans can expect one innovation. The name British Energy gives no indication of the company's nuclear heritage. Also, after one "incident" Calder Hall was rebranded Windscale, and then, after another, Sellafield. Yet the plant British Energy wants to buy — which is next door to the one which came close to meltdown — is still called Three Mile Island.

EMI says album sales likely to disappoint

By CHRIS AYRES

EMI, the troubled British music group behind bands such as The Verve and the Spice Girls, yesterday admitted that it would be "difficult" to match the success of last year's best-selling albums. The company, which recently called off takeover talks with Seagram of Canada, said at its annual meeting that this year's albums by artists such as the Smashing Pumpkins, Robbie Williams and Blur, would be unlikely to match the sales of 1997's hit records. These included albums by the Spice Girls, The Verve and Radiohead.

Sir Colin Southgate, EMI's chairman, painted a gloomy picture of future trading. He said profits had been reduced by about £100 million over the past two years because of the strength of sterling. However, he said he was optimistic that currently dismal music markets would eventually become more "robust".

EMI regained its independence in 1996 after demerging from Thorn. All the world's other music majors, such as Sony and Seagram, which bought PolyGram after calling off talks with EMI, are part of larger corporations. Many analysts believe this makes EMI vulnerable to takeover bids, and market speculation has made the company's stock volatile.

Sir Colin faced heated questioning from shareholders, who have seen their stock plunge in value from a high last year of 738.5p to a recent low of 430p. The shares lost 2p to 513p yesterday.

The main point of controversy at the meeting was the £15 million payoff given to EMI's former head of US operations, Jim Fifield. The American executive resigned last year after his promotion to the board was unexpectedly blocked by Sir Colin.

A management upheaval followed, with several other executives leaving. Yesterday, Sir Colin announced the retirement of Sir Graham Day, 65, a non-executive director.

One shareholder met with applause when he said: "Why were such large payments made to a man who clearly had no intention of staying with us long-term? It seems to me that heads, Mr Fifield wins, and tails the shareholders lose, in every case."

Sir Colin said EMI had negotiated a smaller payout for Mr Fifield than the amount he was originally due to receive under his contract. "I'm afraid the situation with Jim Fifield was driven by his contractual situation. We have to pay the rate of the industry in which we operate," he said.

Southgate: heated questions



Lord Chadlington, chairman of IPR, will convert his 9.6 million shares into Interpublic stock worth £6.7 million

Interpublic bid accepted by IPR

By TIMON DAY

INTERNATIONAL Public Relations, formerly Shandwick, is being taken over by Interpublic, the US advertising and marketing services group, in an agreed all-share bid worth £104 million.

The combined group, taking in Interpublic's public relations agencies Golin/Harris and Weber, becomes the world's second-largest PR combine with revenues of about £200 million, behind Omnicom, also of America.

IPR shares rose 17p to 66½p yesterday. The deal values each IPR share at 70.86p. Lord Chadlington, executive chairman of IPR, will convert his 9.6 million shares into Interpublic stock with a value of £6.7 million. He and his executive directors will run Interpublic's PR agencies worldwide.

The takeover will be a relief to UK Active Fund, which holds 17.5 per cent of IPR, and Fidelity International, with 11.5 per cent, which have seen the value of their investment fluctuate as Shandwick's fortunes changed.

Yesterday IPR said it incurred a first half pre-tax loss of £3.4 million, against interim profits of £3.9 million the previous year. There is no interim dividend. The company incurred reorganisation costs of £4.4 million.

Another reason for IPR's poor performance was its high level of debt, almost £48 million, and negative shareholders' funds of £34 million. Interpublic, employing 28,000 people worldwide, owns advertising agencies McCann-Erickson World-Group, Ammirati Puris Lintas and The Lowe Group.

Finelist makes formal overtures to Partco

By TIMON DAY

FINELIST, the car parts distributor and manufacturer, yesterday tabled a formal proposal to the Partco Group to achieve a friendly merger worth £420 million.

On Monday Partco rebutted Finelist's informal invitation to talks. Phil Wragg, chief executive of Partco, saying it preferred to remain independent and would not talk "in the absence of definitive proposals".

Yesterday Partco said it

would give the Finelist merger proposal "its full attention and a further announcement will be made in due course."

Partco shares jumped 27p to 288½p, valuing it at £189 million compared to £150 million a fortnight ago after its profit warning. Finelist shares were unchanged at 281p, valuing it at £231 million.

Chris Swan, chairman and chief executive of Finelist, envisages Finelist having 55 per cent and Partco 45 per cent of the combined group based on yesterday's valuations.

NatWest tower sold to consortium for £226m

By RICHARD MILES

NATWEST is selling the International Financial Centre, its landmark office development in the City of London, for £226 million to a consortium of investors led by Greycourt, the property company.

The deal with Greycourt, Hermes Pensions Management, which is acting on behalf of the Post Office Pensions Scheme, and Mercury Asset Management is expected to be completed in August. Formerly known as the Nat-

West Tower, the IFC provides 320,000 sq ft of office space on 33 floors. About 60 per cent of the space has been let after the completion of a four-year refurbishment last November after its bombing by the Irish Republican Army in 1993.

Leading tenants include Swiss Re, the insurance company, and Kirkland and Ellis, a US legal firm.

The transaction includes four nearby buildings on Bishopsgate and Old Broad Street, totalling 110,000 sq ft. NatWest plans to rent these.

Cortecs expenses were 'normal'

By PAUL DURMAN

A BOARDROOM split opened at Cortecs yesterday as the former chairman of its remuneration committee sought to justify the controversial package of benefits the controversial package of benefits enjoyed by Glen Travers, former chairman of the drug development company. Mr Travers was entitled to £33,000-a-year for his children's school fees, £34,500 for air tickets to Australia, £42,400 for member-

ship of the Young President's Organisation for executive high-fliers, and £33,800 for overseas car expenses.

These expenses contributed to the board's decision to seek Mr Travers's resignation. However, Leon Ivory, the director who headed the remuneration committee, said the package had been agreed by the board ten years ago and reconfirmed in 1992.

Cortecs said that Mr Ivory had been removed from all board committees and

had issued his statement without consultation. A source close to the company said: "It is highly inappropriate for a non-executive director to behave in this fashion."

Mr Ivory said these were normal expatriate arrangements. Mr Travers is an Australian with a home in Surrey. Lord Patten, Cortecs chairman and a former education secretary, this week bought 11,152 shares in Cortecs, as has James Long, the finance director.

Sears directors put under fire

By MATTHEW BARBOUR AND SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE board of Sears received a roasting from shareholders yesterday over the retail group's share price performance, directors pay and the timing of the demerger of Selfridges, which was nevertheless voted through.

During nearly two hours of questioning at the annual meeting, Sir Bob Reid, chairman, had to repeatedly defend Sears' record. "Why should shareholders trust the board when all the decisions of the last three years have been disasters?" asked Anthony Latter, a director of a company that used to supply Selfridges.

"We've seen a huge devaluation of shareholders' funds, the share price itself has halved over the past three years — the board appears to be pinning all its hopes on this sacred demerger. I don't believe you can reconstruct the

share price with this sort of financial engineering," he said.

Of the votes cast, 92.9 per cent were in favour of the demerger, 0.2 per cent were against and 6.9 per cent were abstentions. Most abstentions came from Clerical Medical, which wanted to make clear its objection to the "bundling" into one vote of the demerger and directors' pay issues.

Directors' pay riled shareholders. "Why, when our adjusted earnings per share has fallen by 30 per cent, has executive remuneration risen by over 50 per cent? Eighty per cent of the board have absolutely no experience of the retail trade, none of which reflects well on the prospects for the demerger. We need to pay the board on the basis of success, not failure," one said.

Dealing in Selfridges shares begins on Monday.

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CHANGING TIMES

NEWS

Staff car spaces to cost £150 a year

A "commuter tax" averaging £150 a year is to be imposed on individual staff parking spaces as Ministers step up their crusade to combat traffic congestion.

Brown sticks to guns on single currency

Gordon Brown promised Labour would not "surrender or subjugate" Britain's national interest as he stood firm on his policy on the European single currency.

Clinton setback

The US Supreme Court insisted President Clinton's bodyguards testify in the Monica Lewinsky inquiry.

Benefits pledge

Thousands of advisers are to be recruited to help to ensure pensioners claim and receive benefits to which they are entitled.

'Cheap' coronation

Public Record Office papers show that, despite apparent pomp and pageantry in June 1953, the Tory Government had insisted on a cur-price Coronation.

Safer transfusions

Blood supplies are to be treated to remove the remote risk of patients being infected with new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Save our ship

The charitable trust that owns the rusting SS Great Britain is appealing for £5 million from the Lottery heritage fund.

Yeltsin in atonement for Tsar's murder

With his hand on his heart in the Cathedral of the Peter and Paul Fortress in St Petersburg, President Yeltsin offered a deep bow of repentance and national atonement to the newly interred remains of Tsar Nicholas II, who was murdered, with his family, 80 years ago to the day by Bolshevik soldiers.



Early queuers enjoying yesterday evening's sunshine outside the Albert Hall as they awaited the start of the first night of the Proms

Anglicans meet

The three-week Lambeth Conference will debate morality, international debt, human sexuality and Christian-Muslim relations.

The Lambeth way

Like all mankind, the Lambeth Conference seems born to trouble as sparks fly.

James Pringle

A photographer captured Saigon's police chief executing a Vietnam. The picture defines the Vietnam War's cruelty.

MPC shake-up

The Government has been urged to appoint more members with private sector experience to the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee.

Cricket

Players from all nine Test countries today pay tribute to Lord's to Diana, Princess of Wales, and W. G. Grace.

Valerie Grove

Ofsted has just delivered its verdict: St Faith's - in the top three of Hampshire's schools two years ago and so popular that there are two pupils vying for every place - is "failing".

Reform of the Lords

pedestrianisation of Trafalgar Square: what makes a perfect summer; Diana memorial; salmon stocks.

Dick McDonald

fast food pioneer; Rachel Rosser, psychiatrist; Richard Berens, journalist.

WEEKEND MONEY

£23 million Asda payout; pick of the car loans.

Biplane magic

Where would-be pilot's learn in a Tiger Moth.

SECTIONS

the times

Squiggle and back: The Artist reborn... Page 18 Hello Beirut: Lebanon's ladies who lunch vie for magazine fame... Page 28

Metro

Big interview: Babybird Stephen Jones... Page 6 Big album: Black Box Recorder's England Made Me... Page 12

WEEKEND

Matthew Parris: Why mum knows best... Page 1 Summer highs: Steppin' out in some strappy sandals... Page 5

Vision

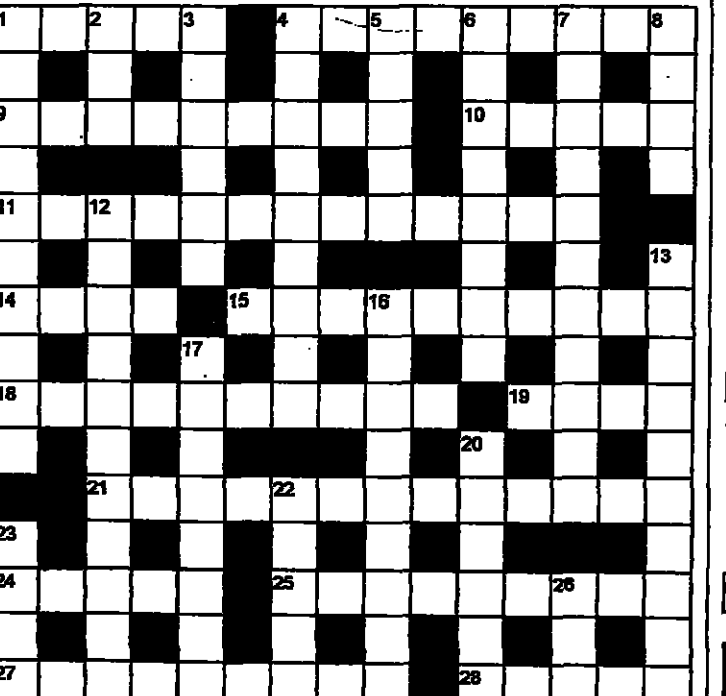
Seven-day listing of radio and 40 TV channels

Hot UK events for a wicked summer

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,847

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday.

Name/Address



- ACROSS 1 Leaders of council here astounded of such confusion (5). 4 Duplicity of tax every ruler introduced (9). 9 At worst, a slave-driver? (9). 10 Delicate and slender maiden drops out of treatment (5). 11 Where you see card's pips, at first glance (2,3,4,2,2). 14 23 stone - how fatty finishes up (4). 15 Fed up after grilling? (7,3). 18 Graciously provokes tinker (10). 19 Take wrong turning, get charged (4). 21 Settler - he isn't disposed to engage in controversy (5,3,5). 24 Extreme and difficult race in which to take part (5). 25 Seal again, after treatment giving relief from pain (9). 27 Nag parliamentarian to provide assistance for drivers (9). 28 Shrub in which bird is heard (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20841



Solution to Puzzle No 20846

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: S Weller, Tharred, Essex; D Pearson, Billingham, Cleveland; F E Brasley, Treowen, St Austell; F J E Arnold, Wellington; P M Taylor, Basing, Glasgow.

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY Sun rises: 5:04 am Sun sets: 9:09 pm Moon sets: 3:46 pm 1:12 am

TOMORROW

Sun rises: 5:05 am Sun sets: 9:07 pm Moon sets: 5:01 pm 1:46 am

High Tides

TODAY Aberdeen 0:04 3:8 20:29 2:7

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Heathrow Airport and Shoeburyness, Essex, 22C (72F); lowest day temp: Llandudno, Gwynedd, 11C (52F); highest night temp: Morrocan, Lancashire, 0°C; lowest night temp: Salcombe, Devon, 10th

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

41% of the raw material for UK newspapers is the first half of 1997

FORECAST

General: largely dry with warm sunny periods in southern and eastern England. Northern Ireland, with northern and western England, will have a mix of sun and showers, although most of the showers will die out later.

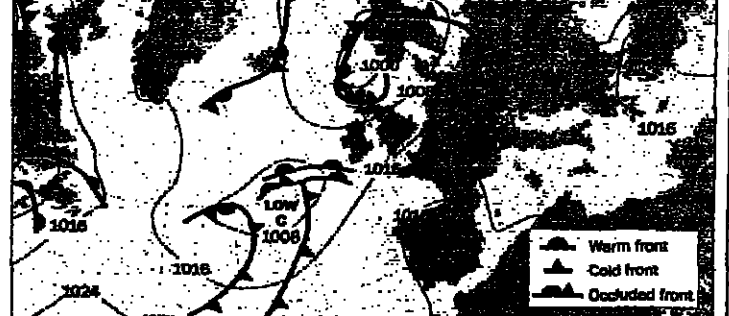
ABROAD: BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Table with columns for location, time, and weather conditions. Includes locations like Aberdeen, Glasgow, London, Manchester, etc.

ABROAD

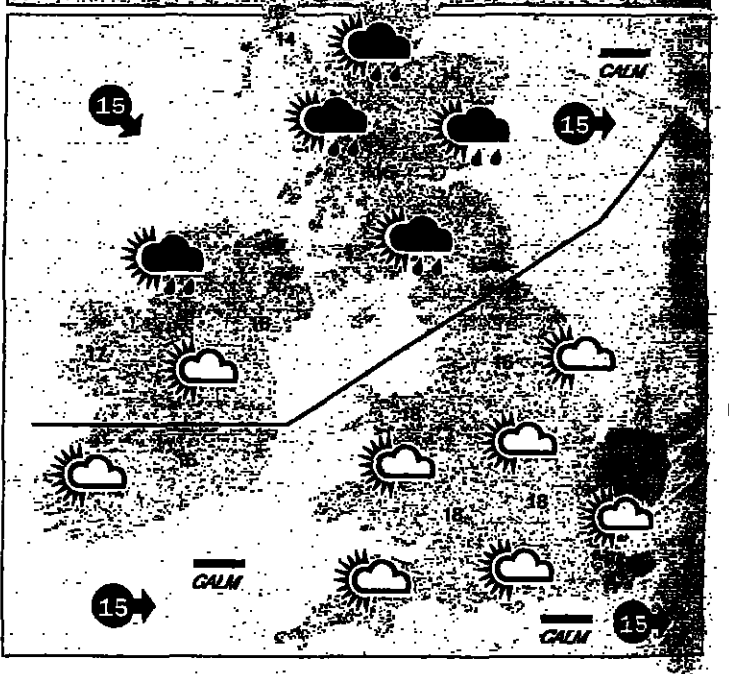
Table with columns for location, temperature, and weather conditions. Includes locations like Alcala, Alicante, Amsterdam, etc.

Temperatures at midday local time on Thursday. C = centigrade; F = fahrenheit



Changes to chart above from noon: low A will move northeast and fill; low B will drift northeast and deepen; low C is expected to push northeast towards Ireland and deepen

WIND TODAY



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UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

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Learning to love the side-saddle
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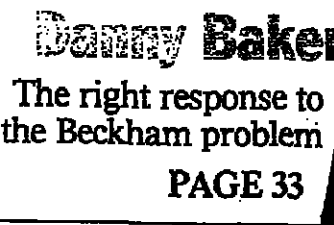


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The right response to the Beckham problem
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THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT **13 PAGES**

JULY 18 1998

CHANGE IN WEATHER BLOWS LEADERS OFF COURSE



Hardy Rose takes Open by storm

By JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

AFTER the calm, the storm. Competitors in the Open at Royal Birkdale were hit twice during the course of the second round of the 127th Championship. The first time was by Hurricane Rose in the shape of an astonishing round by a 17-year-old British amateur that left the world's best players lost in admiration and sprawling in his wake. The second time came late on a storm-tossed afternoon, when a fierce squall brought a heavy downpour and a rush of wind measured at nearly 50mph that caused play to be suspended for 38 minutes.

By then, Justin Rose had completed his 66, which took him to two under par, level with Tiger Woods and Nick Price and one stroke behind Brian Watts, who was born in Montreal of English and German parents and who now lives in Oklahoma. Watts added a 69 to his first round of 68 to be the leader on three under par. Rose, having completed the countless interviews that followed his remarkable performance, was walking on air at this moment and, for all we know, probably thinking that the moon is made of green cheese and that pigs can fly.

If Rose could believe that he was second in the Open after 36 holes and had outscored just about every one of the world's leading players, including Woods, the overnight joint leader, Price, Rose's role model, and Ernie Els, his hero, then Ken Rose, his father, could not. "This is almost a surreal situation," Rose Sr said with a slightly startled look in his eye. "I am not quite sure how I feel. Your kid's name is up there on the leader-board with Tiger and Nick. Wow!"

Yet no praise is too high for Rose, who first came to prominence in the Open three years ago when he narrowly failed to qualify for the event that John Daly would go on to win so thrillingly. Rose was 14 at the time. He was a prodigy then and continued in the same vein by becoming the youngest player to compete in the Walker Cup last summer. "Ah, Justin," they have been saying in amateur circles for some time. "Lovely swing, good family, great promise."

Somewhat surprisingly, Rose's year on the amateur

LEADERBOARD

Par	Player	Scores	Total
-3	B Watts (US)	68 69	137
-2	T Woods (US)	65 73	138
-2	N Price (Zim)	66 72	138
-2	J Rose (GB)	72 66	138
-1	T Bjorn (Den)	68 71	139
Level	D Love III (US)	67 73	140
Level	M O'Meara (US)	72 68	140
Level	F Couples (US)	68 74	140
Level	S Ames (Irin)	68 72	140

Lynne Truss 30
Amateur glory 31
Open season 31

circuit has been relatively ordinary, most notably in the Amateur Championship, when he was knocked out in the first round and the title went to Sergio Garcia, one of the five amateurs vying for the Silver Medal at Royal Birkdale. By way of compensation, Rose's golf was to be seen in full, glorious bloom here when he completely outclassed his professional playing partners, outscoring Steen Tinning by ten strokes and Bradley Dredge by 12.

It is true that Rose had the best of the weather, starting at 11.30, by which time the morning rain had been replaced by sunshine, and concluding before the wind rose and the squall hit and play was suspended at 5.27. At that time, Woods, who had found the same course so benign he had gone round in 65 the previous day, and Price, Jesper Parnevik and Jim Furyk were all in the eye of the storm. They were fighting for their lives, when every step must have seemed leaden and every stroke a struggle.

It is also true that Rose holed every putt that he needed to, such as the 15-footer on the 13th, when it looked as though he might drop one stroke, and a good many others as well. It was his day of days. The one hole that best demonstrated this was the 17th. Even from the new back tee, this hole has proved less difficult than expected. Rose was able to position his drive with a three-wood in the perfect place from which to attack the green with a seven-iron and the ball ended ten feet from the flag.

On such a day, Rose's putter was so hot that it could

Whereas 27 men broke par on the tranquil opening day, and for the first time in the history of the Open the day's highest score was as low as 78, only seven could better the par of 70 yesterday.

Certainly it was far beyond the capability of Colin Montgomerie, who seemed certain to miss the cut. The 74 by the Scot meant that his doleful record in this event was almost sure to be continued. He has played in nine Opens and failed to advance to the last two rounds in five of them.

Gone, too, is John Daly, whose 78 included one of those temporary losses of control to which he seems prone. In Florida in March it was an 18 on one hole, this time a ten. What a perplexing fellow the 1995 champion is. It is hard to conclude anything other than that he simply chucks in the towel occasionally and some wild, deep force takes over.

The conditions took their toll on men such as Fred Couples and Vijay Singh, who both had 74s, and Robert Allenby and Loren Roberts, who had 76s. Nick Faldo, though he took no further part in the Masters and the US Open after 36 holes, stopped this sequence in the major championships. A gritty 73 was good enough for him to continue his record, compiled in 23 Opens, of always reaching the last two rounds.



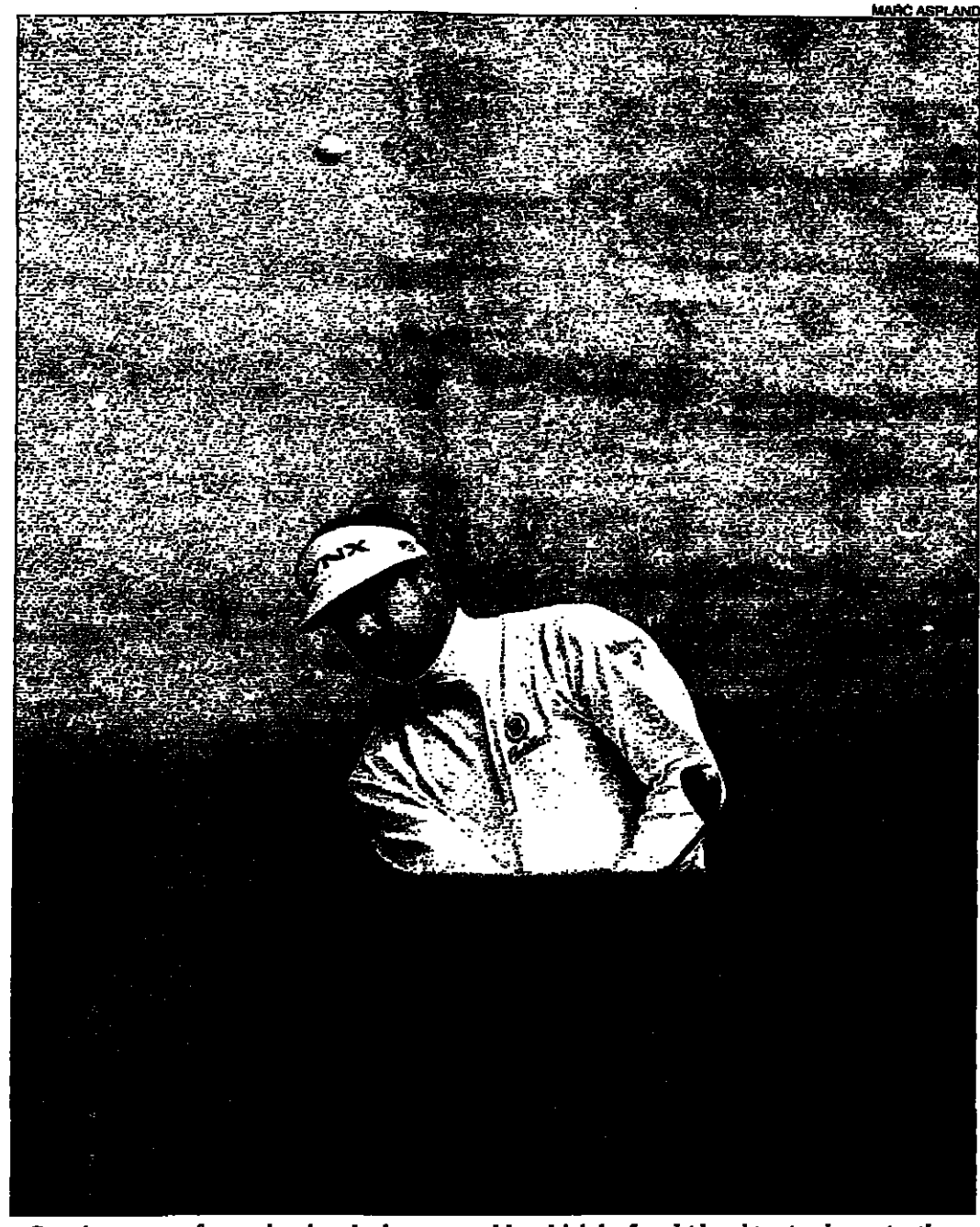
Rough ride: Woods despairs after missing the 9th fairway

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Couples escapes from a bunker during a round in which he fought hard to stay in contention

Freddy's struggle viewed through forest of brollies

LYNNE TRUSS



At the Open

There is a sign outside Royal Birkdale forbidding the entry of spectators; if only they banned umbrellas as well, we'd be laughing. Yesterday morning, as Fred Couples teed off with José María Olazábal and Robert Allenby, the rain soaked us and the tracks grew treacherous, and to top it all, those damned enormous golf umbrellas blocked the view. Later, a ferocious wind would drive rainclouds safely by, but at 9.25am, when the chosen threesome set out, the prospect for those of us gamely joining the crowd outside the ropes (and wearing sensible hats), was for being alternately drenched and having your eye poked out.

Inside the ropes is where special people go. I went inside on Thursday to follow Tiger Woods, and aside from being instructed to move out of the way at the 8th tee (sorry, sorry, sorry), it was an experience of unalloyed privilege. Outside the ropes, with the common folk, there are more opportunities for snacking at ice cream vans, but also more likelihood that you will monitor the progress of a putt ("Ooooooooh-ah") blindly, confronted only by a thicket of waterproof trousers. Outside the ropes, you choose a tussocky dune-crest which commands a decent view, until someone stands in front of you with their broolly up, and you resort to the aural method once again.

Couples was a chap of serious interest, of course. Preppy Freddy, the people's American favourite, who rolls his shoulders and stretches his arms all the time as if his woolly is damp. At the end of

the first round, he was four under par, having shot three birdies, one bogey and one eagle. Everyone calls him "Freddy", assumes he's a nice bloke because he's attractive, and genuinely hopes his back isn't playing him up. So it was no surprise that a large group followed him from the start — especially since he was playing alongside the twin sympathy magnets of Allenby (man who recovered from a terrible accident) and Olazábal (man who recovered from terrible feet).

Playing early had advantages for the People's Freddy. The rain was far preferable to the wind, which came along later to batter the overnight leaders. Outside the ropes, we all worried about Cou-

ples nevertheless, and said "Tsk, Freddy, not again!" as he steadily dropped from four under par to one over par, and finally back to par. Never mind that Olazábal's hopelessly zigzagging fortunes went bogey-birdie-bogey-birdie-upto-downside. The trouble was, Couples was generally dealing well with the conditions, and then oo-ahing his putts — a state of affairs which, as anyone knows, drives a fellow nuts.

At the 457-yard 8th hole, for example, he got himself out of trouble twice — once from the rough, once from a bunker. By now the wind was up and the brollies were down. But having retrieved this situation, Freddy missed the putt, dropped a shot, and fell off the leaderboard. He came out of the front nine having dropped four shots, which is very poor work, I suppose, if you do this sort of thing for a living.

Little could he know, of course, that this was the day Royal Birkdale would reduce plenty of quite large men to tears. Sick as parrots some of them were, as the blue numbers piled up. I was present when John Daly took his insane 10 at the 18th, incidentally, and the wild, desperate whacking he performed in that bunker was exactly the action P.G. Woodhouse has in mind when he says chaps in the rough are killing snakes.

I left Couples at the 9th and took a break. This is an outside-the-ropes option, and it involves

examining your feet for blisters, collapsing to the ground, and moaning "I can't go on." How these blokes walk these distances day after day I can't begin to imagine. True, my absentee behaviour meant I missed Olazábal's ball bouncing off a spectator at the 11th, but on the other hand, by being in a queue for a cheese baguette at the time, I greatly reduced the chance that the brainiac spectator would be me.

So the next thing I knew of Couples, I was sitting in the elevated grandstand at the 14th green, with a distant view of choppy green sea and oil platform. The nearby leaderboard was now full of people whose success was made utterly irrelevant by the fact that they hadn't played yet.

Couples's name had sunk, but would surely rise again by the action of the tide going out. His game had levelled out, and he was getting steady pars. His big 361-yard tee-shot on the 17th availed him nothing (he parred again); but at the 18th — where I again caught up with him — he made his one and only birdie with a sweet five-foot putt.

Rumours reached us in the crowd. Monty was in trouble. Els was six over. The wind was tearing through the leaders like a tornado, and by mid-afternoon the event was as rocky and leaky as a rowing boat at sea. Justin Rose was the hero of the hour, but although Couples refused to comment on his round, he should have been proud of it. He kept his head when all around were committing club-abuse. Maintaining par in these conditions, he ought to be a very happy man.

'Couples kept his head while all around him were committing club-abuse'



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Huston loses control and hopes plummet

By PHIL YATES

THE role of first-round leader in a major championship is one to which John Huston is no stranger, but the impassive American has always found difficulty in sustaining early excellence. Yesterday was no exception.

As a relatively inexperienced member of the US PGA Tour, Huston once led the Masters after the opening day, yet failed to break 80 on the second. An eagle two on the 18th, thanks to holing a seven-iron from an adjacent fairway, enabled him to be the Thursday king at Augusta last year, but, like everyone else, was ultimately left in the wake of an inspired Tiger Woods.

Given his impressive statistics in the United States this year, many thought that on this occasion he had the credentials to stick around. After all, it was argued, Huston was 96 under par for 64 competitive rounds so far this year, with a 28-under-par victory score at the Hawaiian Open in February being the highlight.

It goes without saying that Southport, even in July, bears

no resemblance to a paradise island in the Pacific, though, and despite a fighting effort, Huston found it beyond him to prevent strokes slipping away. One fade, in fact, began another.

Huston looked to have steadied the ship when he stepped onto the tee of the 344-yard 5th, easily the shortest par-four on the course and a hole with an uncanny propensity to lull players into a false sense of security.

Having bolted in a putt for birdie on the 4th to compensate for clumsily taking three putts for a bogey on the 1st, Huston had just cause for guarded optimism. This quickly evaporated when he carved his drive into deep rough.

At that moment, Huston's name still figured prominently on the leaderboard to the right of the 5th green, but his next shot almost finished under it. The clinging grass wrapped around the hosel of his wedge, he then hacked out into a bunker and eventually

trudged away with a double-bogey six.

Having surrendered a lead that he never threatened to regain, Huston exhibited not the slightest sign of disgust. Was this the product of an unflappable temperament, or having found himself in such a situation before, a sign of subconscious resignation?

With the wind by now buffeting the course more intensely with each passing minute, Huston bravely parred the next three holes after unintentionally mingling with the crowd by pulling a fairway wood on the 6th and his drive off the 8th.

Only the odd few short-game magicians — Severiano Ballesteros in his heyday immediately springs to mind — have been able to fashion a respectable score from a succession of unlikely positions. It came as no surprise, therefore, that Huston again boarded the bogey train.

He took five at the 9th after splitting the fairway with his tee-shot. Other shots went west — or considering the direction of the gale, east — at the 10th, 13th and 14th before the elements dictated a suspension of play.

On the resumption, Huston completed a 77, which was 12 shots more than his slick initial effort around the sleeping giant. That left him two over par for the championship and still within striking distance of Brian Watts, a compatriot, to whom the poisoned chalice of leadership had been passed.

Huston's performance yesterday was not akin to his collapse at Augusta, neither was it a triumph. A player who uses a magnetic blanket to alleviate persistent shoulder and back ailments had simply fallen victim to the gravitational forces that invariably drag unexpected Open pace-makers back to earth.



Huston plays out of trouble on the 1st but still gets a bogey

Daly self-destructs again

By MATT DICKINSON

HE MAY be off the alcohol, but the Wild Thing shows no signs of calm. John Daly's self-destructive streak resurfaced spectacularly yesterday when the former Open champion finished with a ten on the last hole to depart the championship in typically controversial style.

To the grimaces of the watching members in the clubhouse, the American, who in March had a US Tour record of 16 at one hole during the Bay Hill Invitational, created a minor sandstorm on the 18th by taking five shots to escape from a fairway bunker.

He departed Royal Birkdale refusing to discuss his sudden loss of temper, so it was left to Payne Stewart, his playing partner, who lost count of the number of shots as he attempted to mark Daly's card.

"I was trying to figure out what he was doing," Stewart said. "I asked him how many he had taken and he didn't know. I told him 'John, I have got to put a figure in here' and he said 'just give me ten'. To be fair, that is what we both thought he had."

"He was in good shape to make the cut and he blew it. He just played the wrong shot. Sometimes when you go into a bunker you have to take your medicine. He was not a

happy chappy". Stewart, who was runner-up in last month's US Open, said.

At five over par on the last tee, Daly was still in with a chance of making the cut. His drive flew into the first fairway bunker, from where he, overambitiously, attempted to go for the green.

Instead, he only went as far as the next bunker, from which it took him five increasingly frantic shots to escape. He visited sand once more via a greenside trap before two putts completed his ten. His round of 78, after an opening-day 73, put him 11 over par.

It was an unexpected episode, given that he had birdied the previous two holes to give himself a chance of surviving until the weekend.

Instead, Daly presumably will spend the time gorging on the chocolate that he needs to distract him from his craving for alcohol. He missed last year's Open because he was rebuilding his life after more treatment for alcoholism.

It may be of little consolation to Daly, but a ten is nowhere near the record for a single hole at the Open. In the first Open in 1860, at Prestwick, one competitor ran up a 21.

سكوا من الاصل

CYCLING: FESTINA TEAM OFFICIALS CHARGED AS DRUGS SCANDAL AGAIN OVERSHADOWS RACING

Back-to-back wins for Cipollini

FROM JEREMY WHITTLE
IN BRIVE LA GAILLARDE

MARIO CIPOLLINI yesterday claimed his second successive Tour de France win in the sixth stage from La Châtre to Brive-la-Gaillarde.

The Italian's decisive burst came at the climax of a long chase by the sprinters, including Cipollini's Saeco team, following an early breakaway led by Max Sciandri, of Britain. Sciandri, who at one point built a big enough lead to become the Tour's overall leader on the road, was accompanied by Cedric Vasseur.



Fränk Bouyer (centre), of France, takes a tumble in the middle of the pack during yesterday's sixth stage from La Châtre to Brive-la-Gaillarde

of France, and Jose Rodriguez, the Spaniard, but with opportunities for the sprinters diminishing as the Pyrenean stages get closer. Cipollini urged his Saeco team on and the fierce pursuit brought the breakaway to an end in the outskirts of Brive.

With Sciandri and his two fellow fugitives recaptured, Cipollini again bettered the finishing burst of Erik Zabel, the German, in the closing 400 metres and proved too strong for fellow countryman Nicola Minali in the slightly uphill finishing straight.

"It's the first time that all the sprinters have been there and that there hasn't been a crash in the finishing straight," the tall Tuscan said. "I've been feeling in better shape and I wanted to show that I was the strongest sprinter."

Sciandri eventually finished well down the field, 16m 20sec behind Cipollini, and blamed Vasseur for not capitalising on their position. He said: "I'm really disappointed. If Vasseur had kept working, then I'm sure we'd have made it to the finish. I really believed in the break, but I don't know why he didn't."

Some consolation for the Briton was the award of the Coeur de Lion, the daily

combative prize given to one feisty rider by the French cheese manufacturer. This morning, Sciandri will receive his weight in cheese in the start village as reward for his efforts.

With today's crucial time trial in mind, Jan Ullrich, the defending champion, kept a low profile and, despite his status as the Tour's pre-race favourite, seemed uncertain of his chances of claiming the race lead from Stuart O'Grady, of Australia, after the 58-kilometre time trial yesterday.

"I'll try to take the jersey," the 24-year-old German said, "but I still haven't tested my form in the mountains or the time trials. This week has been nervous and dangerous and, even though it has been a good

week for the team, I cross myself every time I reach the finish line safely."

Meanwhile, the repercussions of the doping scandal now tagged the Festina Affair continued to overshadow the first week of the Tour.

Yesterday, Bruno Roussel, the Festina team manager, and Eric Ryckaert, the team

doctor, were both formally charged in Lille by the magistrate leading the investigation since Willy Voet, the Festina team masseur, was arrested last week with over 400 vials of illegal drugs in his car.

In addition, the full extent of the Festina company's close involvement with the Tour

organisation became clear, with the revelation that the French team has strong commercial links to the Societe du Tour de France and provide the official timing system to the race until 2003, under an agreement worth five million francs per year.

Richard Virenque, of Festina, going for a fifth successive King of the Mountains title on this year's Tour, said: "This is a nightmare we are living through."

"We came into the Tour with real prospects of taking the Tour whether it was me or Alex Zulle, but instead each day gets greyer and greyer, and it is proving traumatic for us."

But team-mate Laurent Dufaux, already winner of several races this year and

fourth overall in the 1996 Tour de France, continued to protest the team's innocence.

"I'm really shocked by the theories that have been put forward by the press," the 29-year-old Swiss said. "We've been treated like murderers and our families have been deeply hurt by what they're reading at the moment."

In spite of Dufaux's comments, Roger Legeay, who is Chris Boardman's team manager, and Marc Madiot, manager of Sciandri's Italian

Francis de Joux team, urged the Festina riders to reconsider their position.

"It's their decision," Madiot said, "but if I rode for Festina, I would already have quit the Tour to prevent things from getting any worse than they already are."

DETAILS

LA CHATRE TO BRIVE (127 miles): 1. M. Cipollini (I), Saeco, 6hr 36min 22sec; 2. N. Minali (I), Saeco, 6hr 37min 22sec; 3. E. Zabel (G), Telekom, 6hr 38min 22sec; 4. J. Ullrich (D), Telekom, 6hr 39min 22sec; 5. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 40min 22sec; 6. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 41min 22sec; 7. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 42min 22sec; 8. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 43min 22sec; 9. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 44min 22sec; 10. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 45min 22sec; 11. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 46min 22sec; 12. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 47min 22sec; 13. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 48min 22sec; 14. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 49min 22sec; 15. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 50min 22sec; 16. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 51min 22sec; 17. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 52min 22sec; 18. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 53min 22sec; 19. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 54min 22sec; 20. J. S. O'Grady (A), Saeco, 6hr 55min 22sec; 21. J. S. 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Friendly fire claims lives as addicts get their July fix

In my first column, I made the point that nobody really likes the first six weeks of the football season. The matches seem unconnected with any outcome ten months hence, the weather is peculiar and warm and a numbing sense of attendance through duty puts a dampener on what little excitement can be mustered. Add to this a rising acknowledgment that here just might be your most sparkling form of the season and I think we can see that the opening exchanges present a quite serious danger to personal mental health and national morale.

I have, therefore, already begun to raise funds in order covertly to bribe certain "approachable" FA officials and see if the upcoming season might not be shunted to the end of September. However, even if my slush fund bore fruit, it is apparent that we would still be in the same disconnected and dutiful position come kick-off, though admittedly slightly less fatigued by the World Cup.

DANNY BAKER



What we actually need is for the opening few months of the campaign to be held behind closed doors. Results could be classified like state secrets until one Monday in October, when fans may go to their local post office and pick up a complete guide to what's been going on. Imagine! Like being dealt an intriguing and deliciously weighted hand of cards, you pore over a new league table that actually means something; cemented shocks to fascinate, form instantly revealed without the dreary process of sifting through the puzzle piece by piece.

Sadly, even this slice of exciting, genius reasoning will not suffice, because no matter how much backing and funding we get, we will always be hamstrung by the junkies among us, those lost souls who, even now, are attending exhibition matches. For the Friendsies have started, and with the Friendsies go those People Who Go To Friendsies.

The handful that will attend these matches are beyond any kind of hope. Think about it. Guiseley against Scunthorpe. Phone calls were made, travel arrangements put together, kits cleaned, kettles boiled, team talks floated, gates opened, people mooched in. It's July the 15th, for the love of God! What are you lunatics playing at? What on earth could either squad have learnt from Guiseley against Scunthorpe? And it finished 0-0!

Man 1: "Well, I thought that'd be a better game."
Man 2: "It was like neither side really wanted it."

Even as I type this, Ipswich Town are preparing to take on Akademisk Boldklub, with the carrot of Southend United in two days' time. What for? Go home to your families, anything just stop playing bloody football matches. The next thing you know they'll be whining about a fixture pile-up making them ill, and here they are in the middle of the football night taking on Akademisk Boldklub, an outfit so obscure that when I filed a search for them on the World Wide Web my modem began issuing smoke.

So, instead of throwing away cash on nursery schools and more chiropodists on call, this Government must start looking at the runaway numbers exploited because of their chronic football dependency. Battered, stuffed and satad as we are right now, we will all, nevertheless, be among their number soon enough.

Man 1: "You'er going tomorrow?"
Man 2: "They playing? Who they go?"
Man 1: "Ponetract Collieries ... Friendly, you know."
Man 2: "Yeah I might do ... I'll give you a knock."

Sky is limit for Shaka

A few weeks back, I said Glenn Hoddle "was no rock scientist". It has since been brought to my attention that though this may be the case, I could not use the phrase for all footballers. Step forward Shaka Hislop, the West Ham United goalkeeper, who did indeed hold a technical post at NASA before pursuing his sporting choice. On top of this, he is Shaka by choice and actually Neil by birth, casting off his mundane Western handle in favour of a tribute to the glorious late Zulu chief. What an extraordinary man! Coral quotes me an irresistible 150-1 for Shaka to become England coach one day. "Destiny, then, is a name for facts not yet passed under the fire of thought ..." Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Eat my words? Not a chance

Four weeks ago I gave away free in these columns a small cut-out-and-keep box in which was written the words "Brazil Will Not Win The World Cup", along with a promise to actually eat every one of these vouchers returned if the statement proved false. I can imagine the disappointment of many readers as France romped home barely breaking sweat.

Indeed, of the fourteen people gathered in my front room to watch the game, no fewer than eleven had brought their slips along, three rather impishly supplying sachets of salt, pepper and ketchup with which it was hoped the meal might be more tastily demolished. You will be unsurprised to know I refused to allow such hubris to pass unpunished.

As the game unfolded and France's domination became

total, so did my own loud pronouncements grow on the folly of being swept along by populist energies. Football, I reminded everyone, was a deep science and those of us at its pith were not for a moment hoodwinked by bright shirts, beating drums and crowd shots of pretty girls. Yes, Brazil are always a welcome addition to World Cups, but those who put any faith in them winning the trophy are showing an understanding of the great game on a par with those punters who bet on some horse in the Grand National simply because it contains the name of a favourite nephew.

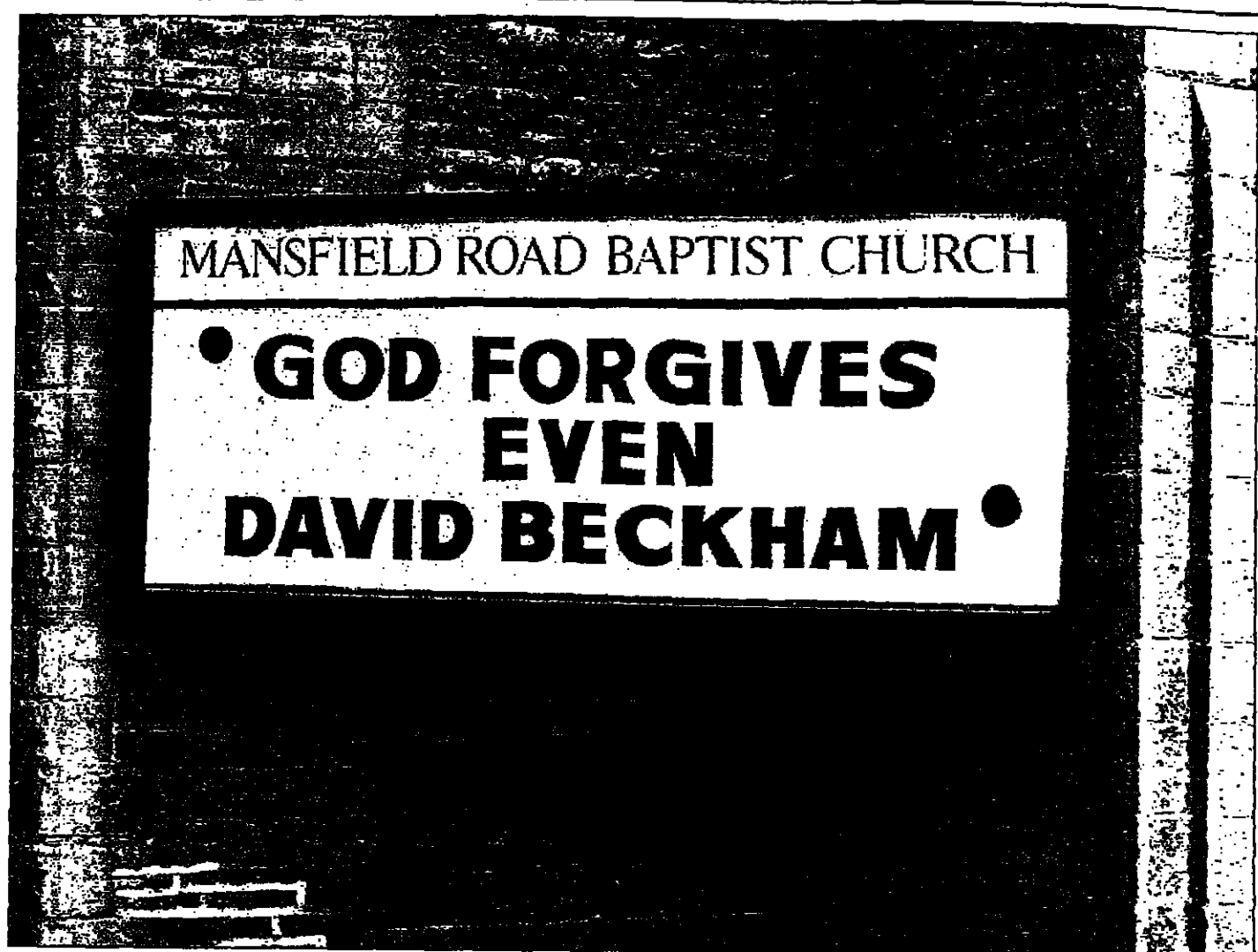
Experts know that Brazil are notoriously brittle and the moment of their eventual disastrous exit is like the bloody deaths of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, simply a matter of where and when. That it came in

the final was neither here nor there; it could easily have been against Morocco. The true genius of South American football are, of course, Bolivia. I boomed unchallenged, but Bolivia sadly were stopped from qualifying by pure politics, the machinations of which I am sure all present are completely up to speed with.

Yes, I was totally unbearable throughout the match, driving away some guests away even before the Grand Cru was exhausted. As they left, they shot me a glance, to quote Woodhouse, "like a Russian timber wolf having seen its evening meal of peasant shin up a tree".

What a magnificent competition this has been ...

□ Danny Baker is on Talk Radio (1053-1089am) every Saturday at 11.30am and 5.30pm.



Beckham has friends in high places, but he is likely to find less charity from rival supporters when the season gets under way

Roast Beckham still on the menu

The campaign is well under way to resurrect David Beckham's reputation and see to it that he gets a fair shake when he takes the field next season. In *The Sun* he wins the readers' poll for Best Free Kick Of The World Cup, and that sometimes unforgiving newspaper takes this to mean there are no hard feelings all round.

Of course, in order to win Best Free Kick Of The World Cup, David only had to beat an off-target Iranian pea-roller and an attempt from Bebetto that rattled the outside loo on the Mir space station. What's more, the poll probably doesn't take into account the sarcastic votes registered under the heading "Best Free Kick", but perhaps pointing that out is not the spirit.

Sadly, despite everything, David is going to be roasted like the last chicken in Afghanistan for at least the first three months of next season, and should the wretched bloke actually bring down an opponent on their home turf, the boos will be heard in heaven. However, this is no blinkered campaign of hatred, no vindictive wrecking of a promising career, no truly malicious vendetta.

I'm afraid I might have to admit it's rather fun, though. Barking, booing and catcalling from the cheaper seats is as legitimate and ancient a part of supporting as the accepted mass reflex chourising of "corner" when the ball does indeed go behind. Walk-

ing towards a ground knowing there's a big juicy villain to growl at is exciting and warming.

Even the player's own supporters, facing facts that one of their number is an out and out, no good bad 'un, will feel the delicious thrill of living life on the wrong side of town. They will rally round him, over-support him, canonise him in response to their enemies' demonising. Any period when a club does not have such a dividing point in its ranks are seasons in the wilderness, flat and characterless.

Where David Beckham is going wrong is moping and apologising and throwing himself upon the mercy of the court. He really

thinks that football supporters are brooding over England going out of the World Cup rather than simply catching sight of a vulnerable Man Utd backside rising exposed into the air. All that talk about the worst moment of his life is pure blood in the water to the mob instincts. In Northern working men's clubs, no comic can survive by wringing his hat in his hands and asking the assembled tables for understanding, seeing as he's not been too well lately.

You have to go on the attack. Had David Beckham come to me, I would have issued the following press release on his behalf:

"Those lousy Argentinian bas-



Did Simeone vote for his best free kick of the World Cup?

tards. What do you do? Don't blame me - my only regret is that I didn't belt him hard enough. You know how it is, lads, all the way through a game he's niggling away because he knows I can't hit him back. Well, who do they think we English are, eh? We're men first, footballers second - am I right? Anyway, I know you'll all be coating me off next season and, to be honest, I can't wait. Let's go. See you there. Keep your eye on me off the ball though, eh? Your Pal, Dave Beckham.

PS: Booooooooooooo!

Instead he appears to have legged it, leaving just a few mumbling agents for calm inadvertently to keep the heat under the story. Perhaps the trouble is that Beckham might be spiritually closer to the entertainment world, where they take public rejection personally, than the football world, where it can add a couple of thousand to the gate. Some of the greatest names in British, indeed world, football history have lived every kick of the ball to the sound of bansheehish baying for blood, and it brings a little pepper to a match. Let us not pretend otherwise.

Ultimately, though, David Beckham won't need to summon up an Eric Cantona or even a Vinnie Jones to help him to ride out the coming storm. He need only to knock on the door marked "referee" and ask that inveterate wretch how he stays on the dragon's back.

Free the fixture list from its bonds

Is all the ritual and drama to be sucked out of soccer? I was casually asking a friend if he knows yet who our opponents will be on New Year's Day and he looked at me like I'd asked him Who Shot JR Ewing. Of course he knew who our opponents will be, the fixtures came out in June and have done for the past five years. I really had no idea.

While I have explained elsewhere that the opening of a football season holds nothing but drear and duty for most fans, one of the few good things about it was popping along to the newsagents in the first week of August to pick up the free piece of card folded like a Chinese takeaway menu, usually sporting a snappy reminder to patronise the local paper, which revealed another year's slogging fixtures. No more. They arrive in June and there's a reason they arrive in June, too. What has happened is that the powers that be, glimpsing the innocent joy children, pensioners and overweight, middle-aged men took from the release of such information as: Sat Nov 5th: Walsall (A); Wed Nov 12th: League Cup 2nd Rd 1st Lg; Sat Nov 15th: Tranmere R (H); Sat Nov 22nd: Bury (H) suddenly realised they were guilty of dispensing free joy.

So what they have done is copyright all the league fixtures and the fixture list, whether given as a season or in weekly or monthly slabs, must be paid for by publications like a trashy paperback book or a pound of pear drops. I know this may be common knowledge already, but I, for one, missed those headlines.

Imagine, if you will, that George Thorogood, the American guitarist, is coming on a tour of Britain. Or perhaps ailing Britpop pioneers Sleeper set out on the UK road. Imagine if they turned around and told newspapers that they will only reveal the venues they will be playing at if the editors of those papers pony up a wed of cash first. Ask yourself, how tiny a piece of shirk would they be handed? Small as a full stop or smaller? But, of course, Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea are not George Thorogood and Sleeper and so the piggies, already stuffed to bursting point, wave the Securicor truck to dump more succulent coinage in the trough. Free fixture lists? Queen Victoria's dead you know, grandad!

This really can only get worse. Within two seasons all major Premiership fixtures will be played at secret locations, with only a handful of captains of industry and visiting emirs being informed of the time and place an hour before kick-off. Tickets will cost £500,000 each and will bear a real gold watermark portraying the happy old head of Ken Bates. Second and third division fixtures will be played in the middle of the night, down coalmines, and become a regulation fifteen minutes in duration. Really important games, say FA Cup semi-finals, will be offered to certain secret individuals who, should they opt for such an investment, may keep the fixture forever in the vault of a Japanese bank.

I suppose I could hang on here like the smell of distemper during these few pallid weeks when the House Of Sport has its Closed For Redecoration sign up, but, as you might have gleaned from the last strands of straw out of which I whipped up this week's bricks, the Big News train is passing round the back of the mountain. So I shall lie down until the start of another crackpot season. If you're going on holiday, bon voyage or, if like me, you're moving house and becoming a father, you must have noticed how the World Cup already seems like a lot of fuss about nothing. As Beavis and Butt-head would say, "Heh heh ... huhheh ... sport ..."

BOXING: FORMER WORLD CHAMPION MUST SUCCEED TO KEEP CAREER ALIVE

Eubank in last-chance saloon

CHRIS EUBANK returns to the ring tonight to make what surely must be his final attempt to keep his boxing career going. If he fails at the Sheffield Arena to take the World Boxing Organisation cruiserweight title from Carl Thompson in their second meeting, retirement would be the only sensible course for the former world champion from Brighton.

Having been beaten by Steve Collins twice and had the door of the super-middleweight division closed on him by Joe Calzaghe, Eubank tried to find a niche in the weaker cruiserweight division. There, too, he did not have the stamina to deal with Thompson and found himself in hospital after one of the most bruising contests seen in a British ring for a long time.

Eubank is 31, and many are concerned that he is heading for another tough fight that could leave him with serious injuries. But, typically, he is

making light of his visit to hospital, and said that he would dispose of Thompson quickly and avoid taking too much punishment.

Having had Thompson on the floor early in their contest, Eubank believes that he will be able to keep him down this time. "I'll be able to stop him in six rounds," he said. "I have the know-how. I have felt his strength and I'm much more confident. I'm also feeling more relaxed than before."

Eubank trained in the Algarve, then moved to a camp in Cornwall, near Bodmin. With Dennis Andries as his sparring companion, his sparring partner pushed Eubank has been pushed to give his best for every minute of every round. "Dennis is very strong man both mentally and physically," Eubank said. "When I spar with him, it's very tough. He can motivate me for this fight."

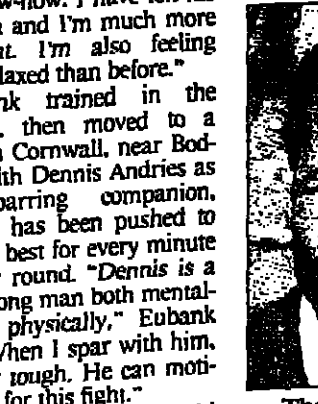
Another factor that could

off. He won't be able to do that this time, because he'll have a harder time from me than from Carl in the fight."

Thompson, stung by Eubank's jibe that he was "as exciting as a bag of wet Brussels sprouts," said: "I am determined to take him out. I have anger for people who disrespect me. I'm going to be the first person to stop him."

Thompson proved surprisingly resilient last time. Every time Eubank floored him or had him reeling, he recovered quickly and came back into the fight. Whenever Eubank had him in trouble he held back. Almost certainly this was because he did not want to risk exhausting himself in an all-out attack.

This time, if Eubank is fit to capitalise on similar situations, he should stop Thompson. If he cannot follow up when he has the advantage, it will be another bruising fight and Eubank will be beaten on points.



Thompson: resilient

FOOTBALL: FORMER ASTON VILLA MANAGER SURPRISE CHOICE OF CHAMPIONS

Celtic opt for veteran Venglos

RUUD GULLIT and Ron Atkinson had been mentioned as possible candidates. So had Gerard Houllier, the former France coach, until he joined Liverpool. Yesterday, Celtic finally got their man - Dr Jozef Venglos, the former Aston Villa manager who arrived at Villa Park in July 1990 and left ten months later after guiding the club to an unimpressive seventeenth place in the old English first division.

Reaction to the appointment of the 62-year-old from Slovakia as head coach was muted. Peter Rafferty, president of the Amalgamation of Registered Celtic Supporters' Clubs, said: "He is a bit of a mystery man. It is not a name we expected."

"Overall, it is a surprise move on the club's part, and I think that is how the supporters may view it, but we must give him a chance to show what he can do. The club have now made the appointment

and we have to be patient while he settles in."

Venglos, the first foreigner to manage a top-flight English club, has also coached the national teams of Australia, Malaysia, Oman, Slovakia and Czechoslovakia. He is a member of the technical committee of Fifa, the sport's world governing body, and has signed a three-year contract at Parkhead.

"Jozef has a wealth of experience and knowledge of coaching that is difficult to match in world football," Fergus McCann, the Celtic managing director, said. "The process we have gone through has involved talking to many people. It has been an in-depth search and, at the end of it, we have an intelligent man with a mature attitude and a knowledge of playing and coaching at the highest level."

Venglos's brief includes preparing the club for the next millennium. "He will help to identify and groom a successor," McCann said. "I believe that he will not only take the first team forward, but will ensure the entire coaching set-up throughout the club has a strong foundation for many years to come."

Celtic host St Patrick's Athletic, of the Republic of

Ireland, in the first leg of a European Cup Champions' League first qualifying round tie on Wednesday, giving Venglos little time to settle in. He will also have to work on a consultancy basis until his work permit is processed. "I could not resist the offer of the opportunity to coach a club that is embedded in world soccer's history," he said.

Aimé Jacquet, who led France to their World Cup triumph, has become director of coaching with the national side, replacing Houllier. Roger Lemerre, the former Lens coach, is expected to take over from Jacquet.

Arsenal have failed in an attempt to buy Patrick Kluyvert, the AC Milan and Holland striker, after their undisclosed bid was rejected. "We did not consider it was enough," Adriano Galliani, the Milan vice-president, said yesterday. Milan are believed to be seeking more than £10 million for Kluyvert.

England's main tormentors are planning a reunion for the next Ashes series

McGrath the cheerful bearer of grim news

For an England team painfully short of credibility, victory in the Ashes series this winter appeals as an instant panacea. It seemed suddenly accessible when injury cast the participation of Australia's two best bowlers into serious doubt, but the appearance in London this week of Glenn McGrath should effectively dampen patriotic optimism.

McGrath is treating the boards today back at his personal theatre of drama in St John's Wood. It will be his first cricket in the seven months since he suffered severely torn stomach muscles during a Test match in Sydney, the type of injury that routinely arouses concern over a fast bowler's future.

While confidently pronouncing himself fully recovered, McGrath also had news of Shane Warne that he thought encouraging but everyone English will find distinctly alarming. Warne's shoulder is on the mend after surgery and the Ashes series remains his target: the two men who shared 60 Test wickets here last summer may yet be reunited to torment us.

"I saw Warne last weekend," McGrath reported. "His shoulder is going OK. He will definitely miss our tour of Pakistan in October, but the best scenario is that he will play against England. We certainly haven't given up on him."

As McGrath cheerfully remarks, there are those who think Warne "only has to roll his wrist to take wickets

ALAN LEE



against the Poms". It might equally be thought that McGrath himself has only to run in on that gunbarrel-straight approach and turn his arm over in that simple, metronomic action for English batsmen to submit.

He dismissed 36 of them last summer, including eight for 38 in England's humiliating 77 all out at Lords, where today McGrath, 28, will turn out for MCC against the Rest of the World. He will bring with him predictably fond memories and a body that he believes can carry him through several more years of Test cricket.

McGrath was in a tracksuit when we met, fresh from a loosening bowl in the MCC indoor school. He looked fit and relaxed, stronger across the shoulders than of old and

ready with the winning smile that sets his after-hours personality so at odds with the snarling aggression that he emits when bowling.

Companionable and strikingly self-confident, he spoke candidly of his breakdown and its causes, putting much of the blame on himself. "I had let my strength maintenance work slip," he said. "It's difficult when you are bowling 20 or 25 overs a day and you feel tired, but I wasn't putting in enough time in the gym. I'd opened myself up to injuries. It was quite a lesson."

"I knew as soon as I was injured that I would have a long lay-off. I'd gone into that Test (against South Africa) with a shadow over me. I'd had a trapped nerve in my groin and all the muscles around it had stiffened up. I did the damage in my eighth over but I went on to bowl another 17 because, having started the game, I felt I had to get through it."

"There was an option to open me up and stitch it, but we decided on complete rest. For five months, I did nothing — didn't run on a train and never picked up a ball. Two weeks ago, I had my first bowl and there was no pain at all. It's healed very well."

Two months of fitness training, six days a week in the gym, has also left an impression. "I've put on some weight and I'm looking to put on a bit more. I'm 94 kilos now but three years ago, after our tour of the West Indies, I weighed 77. You can guess how skinny I looked then."

McGrath had to pass a medical examination in Melbourne last week before receiving permission from the Australian Cricket Board to play at Lord's and he feels the game has come at an opportune time. "It will be good to see how the body feels," he said. "We've got the Commonwealth Games coming up and then the Pakistan tour, which is a real priority as we've found it so hard to win on the sub-continent."

Because it is Lord's, today will be special. McGrath looks back analytically on his stuttering start to last year's series in the defeat at Edgbaston and the rapid transformation between Tests. "If I'm not bowling well, it's always to do with my run-up," he said. "At Edgbaston, I was running in too hard, getting to the crease too soon and having to slow down a fraction. I got it right in the county game at Trent Bridge a week later and at Lord's the rhythm was back."



Australia's leading strike bowler, the fearsome McGrath, has a clear-eyed vision of a batsman's weaknesses and how he can best exploit them

"That day is definitely up there with the best of my career. I've got the highlights on video and I use it for visualisation training. Watching yourself taking wickets, rather than being hit for fours, puts you in a good frame of mind."

McGrath's Test record is impressive — 166 wickets at 23.51 apiece from his 37 games. He sets his target at five wickets per Test, a rate achieved only by Allan Donald among contemporary bowlers, and it is no surprise that he names accuracy as his greatest asset.

"It's when I watch other bowlers who build up the pressure and then waste it all with a free hit down the leg side that I think maybe I am up there with the best, because I don't do that."

"My method is very simple and if I have a bowler like Warne at the other end, adding to the pressure, some-

thing has to give. I'd still like to master a consistent outswinger, but I've learned reverse swing, which will help me greatly in Pakistan, and although I'm not the quickest going round, I think I bowl quite aggressively."

He admits to reserving his harshest hostility for tailenders, as Robert Croft will testify, and has no respect for the old protocol of pitching the ball up to the rabbits.

"Not sure what happened to that," he grins, and the assurance with which such words are spoken tells of a character who has developed as rapidly as his bowling.

McGrath was a country boy, raised on a wheat and sheep farm in rural New South Wales. Stories abound of him getting lost when he first ventured into Sydney, but

for all his accumulated worldliness, the influence of his roots remains strong. "I miss the country now more than ever, so I've bought a property out in the bush," he said. "It's quite a substantial plot, 34,000 acres, and the nearest town is 160 kilometres away. It's so relaxing out there, so tranquil."

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by myself," he admits. Unlike many cricketers, McGrath has an inquisitive mind and an urge to look outside the confines of his job. He is learning to fly a helicopter and, on tour with Australia, he can often be seen with Steve Waugh, familiarising himself with local scenes and

customs while team-mates skulk in the artificial world of their hotel.

McGrath credits the Australian Cricket Academy for acting as his finishing school — "It taught me there was much more to cricket than just turning up to play" — but warns that the system, still being considered in England, does not work for everyone. "Some guys come out of there and think they have already made it, then just swan around and never fulfil their potential."

No one can say that of McGrath. If the measure of a sportsman is his success rate against the very best, then his achievement in dismissing Brian Lara seven times in nine games, and Michael Atherton nine times in eight, sets him apart from the pack.

"Against Lara, my plan was simple. He's an aggressive player and I set out to be him up, putting it on the spot just outside off-stump, not full enough to drive or short enough to cut. I knew what I was doing and I knew he knew, but he just couldn't help himself."

"With Atherton, I kept him under pressure with my accuracy, then set him up for the short ball. I think I got him that way six out of nine."

Atherton, then, will be especially pleased to have McGrath on his side at Lord's today. He will undoubtedly wish that the same could apply through the coming winter.



McGrath celebrates Atherton's dismissal at the Oval

'Dismissing Lara seven times in nine games sets him apart'

Time to bring Hick and Salisbury back from exile

GRAEME HICK and Ian Salisbury have had two years to wonder if another opportunity might come their way in an environment where neither man did himself justice. Through a mixture of necessity, misfortune and persuasive form, they will surely take their chance together at Trent Bridge on Thursday.

Hick seems certain to replace the injured Graham Thorpe for the critical fourth Test against South Africa, while Salisbury will bring his remodelled leg spin to the desperate cause of a bowling attack that has shown no indication of being able to take 20 wickets in a game.

These will not be the only matters to concern the England selectors when they gather in London this evening. They will also return to the well-trodden territories of an opening partner for Michael Atherton and an attacking all-rounder, plus considering another fast-bowling alternative.

When the immediate issues are clarified, they will turn their attention further ahead, deciding between Alec Stewart and Adam Hoolioake for the captaincy of the one-day side to play a triangular tournament next month and compiling a provisional training squad for the engagements, home and overseas, between now and the World Cup.

Rightly, the priority will be to identify a team capable of salvaging a summer in which a variety of factors, and not least the inadequacies of the Test side, have combined to diminish cricket in the public perception. Next week, with

By ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

other major sporting events ended and summer surely overdue, the game will have a day in the sun it can ill afford to squander.

England's past two performances have been mortifying and the fact that they can still win the series is no reflection of how it has proceeded since their encouraging start in Birmingham. They were abysmal at Lord's and they did not start to play at Old Trafford until victory was beyond them.

There are those who will scoff at the prospect of a return to Hick, in so doing underestimating his record and ignoring the lack of feasible options.

John Crawley might receive a mention and Andrew Flintoff almost certainly will, but there is a depressing shortage of twenty-somethings to press the established England middle order. Hick



Hick: mentally stronger

has a respectable Test average of 36, despite a woeful start at this level, and he is in form. Most important, he seems mentally stronger. He deserves the chance to prove it.

The possibility of Stewart returning to the top of the order cannot be discounted, but, after successive failures for Steve James and Nick Knight, the logical step is a return to Mark Butcher, who made 77 at Edgbaston and only lost his place through a thumb injury.

Ashley Giles will make way for Salisbury, a far more controlled bowler than the one brutally seen off by Pakistan in his last appearance at the Oval in 1996, and if only one spinner plays, the casualty could be Robert Croft, who cannot expect to hold his place on the strength of his defiant batting in Manchester. He must be judged, instead, on the fact that he has not taken a wicket in three Tests.

After waiting so long to team up the three best seam bowlers in the country at Old Trafford, it was a great disappointment that only Darren Gough offered penetration. Five months after his triumphs in the Caribbean, Angus Fraser's place is in jeopardy on what looks sure to be another easy-paced pitch and a quicker bowler, possibly Ed Giddins, will be added to the squad.

Possible squad for Trent Bridge: Atherton, Butcher, Hussain, Stewart (captain), Ramprakash, Hick, B Hoolioake, Croft, Cork, Gough, Salisbury, Fraser, Giddins.

England reliant on form of Edwards

By SARAH POTTER

THE England women's team need to win both one-day internationals this weekend, at Hove and Southampton, to prevent the five-match series against Australia from slipping away. Vital to home hopes will be the form and fitness of Charlotte Edwards, their most talented batsman.

So far, neither has been good. The matches at Scarborough and Derby have yielded just 21 runs for the England opener, suggesting the psychological battle of wits is being won by Cathryn Fitzpatrick, the Australia strike bowler. Of more concern is the knee injury originally sustained during the World Cup in India last December.

"I think it started because of hard grounds, and twisting my front foot when I was bowling didn't help," Edwards said. "It got better for a while, but I went to South Africa with the under-21s in April and it got worse again."

She has been told she will probably need an operation. "I couldn't even lock my knees out straight because there was so much swelling," she said. "An operation would mean straightening my kneecaps." Fortunately for England, Edwards will not consider it before the end of this series. "I'm young and I want to get out there and play against the best," she said. "The team want me to do well, but they want me to play my own game and we do believe we can win."

Press-gang vote a mixed blessing

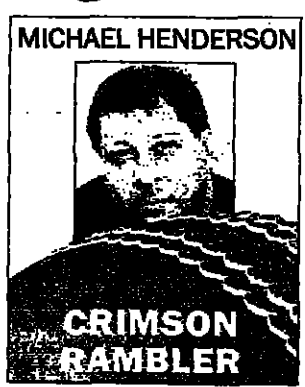
IN the next week or two that notable body of men, the cricket writers, will be voting for their young player of the year. The candidate must be under 23 at the start of May and should have excelled in some way, otherwise there is not much point in having the award.

The lucky chap receives his gong at the Cricket Writers' Club dinner, the night before the NatWest Trophy final. Jacketed, black-tied and red-faced, and the target of ribbing by his mates, he usually says predictable things about following in famous footsteps and finds the grace to thank the writers (who, for the other 364 days of the year, are nothing but a bunch of rotters).

Last year Ben Hoolioake was the winner and cracked a good joke about being the only member of the Hoolioake family to win the award. Hoolioake minor played one Test last year, at 19 smashed Australia around Lord's in a one-day international and helped Surrey to win the Benson and Hedges Cup.

He was also praised to the heavens by the tabloid press, who decided early on that he was worth a punt, and when England lost a few games, shares in him rose even higher.

It may be a good time to buy a few more. Hoolioake will probably get a second call this weekend, when the selectors gather to pick the England side to play the fourth Test against South Africa, which begins at Trent Bridge on Thursday. One can only wish him well.

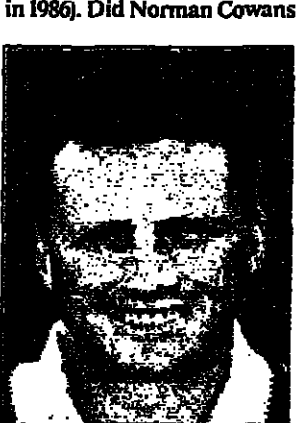


CRIMSON RAMBLER

either, which will help him through the bad days.

It is often said, not least by the players, that the press build up players only to knock 'em down, and there is something in that. Something, but not everything. A look back at the players who have won the young cricketers' award is revealing. How many have gone on to accomplish great things? And what does that say about our judgment?

Have a look at the 20 players who have won the award since David Gower got it in 1978 (the prize was shared in 1980). Did Norman Cowans



Metcalf and Lathwell did not fulfil their potential

(1982) train on? Not really. Middlesex thought that they were doing pretty well if they got him on to the field. And what of Ashley Metcalf (1986)? A gifted strokeplayer in his youth, he simply lost it, poor lad.

The list includes two Test captains, Mike Gatting (1981) and Michael Atherton (1990), and two bowlers who could have been outstanding but for persistent injury (Graham Dilley, 1980, and Neil Foster, 1983).

David Lawrence (1985) suffered a terrible knee injury in New Zealand. Nasser Hussain (1989) has fulfilled his early promise, though it has taken longer than people thought at the time. Mark Ramprakash (1991) still has a bit to do.

The others are a mixed bag, a sort of Quality Street with too many soft centres. Paul Parker (1979) played one Test, two years later, Richard Blakey (1987) played a couple, on the ill-starred tour of India in 1992-93.

How many people remember that, now? Matthew Maynard won in 1988, the year he

made his Test debut, but he played only three times more.

Ian Salisbury, another hoping to be selected for Trent Bridge next week, was the winner in 1992, a year before Mark Lathwell, who has been completely forgotten. He was a real "eye" player, a lad with wonderful talent and absolutely no ambition.

If ever the Fourth Estate sneaked someone aboard the Test ship, it was Lathwell in 1993. Mr Roebuck, who is from Lathwell's neck of the woods, thought he should replace Atherton ("disposable as a Bourbon prince") at the top of the order.

John Crawley (1994) has not trained on. Chris Silverwood (1996) may never get the chance. Andrew Symonds (1995) suddenly discovered what the world already knew that neither Stewart, nor Thorpe, nor Fraser, nor Gough for that matter, nor the award.

The saddest case was Rob Bailey (1984). He caught the eye as a handsome young batsman and journalists will not say a word again him because he is among the nicest of men.

If he had been given a go against any team other than West Indies, first in 1988 and then on four two winners later, when he got a famously poor decision, he might have made a decent fist of Test cricket. Instead, his career has been largely unfulfilled.

The ballot papers have gone out. We writers have got our thinking caps on (much good it will do). A month from now the winner will be invited to dine at high table. He might think it is a laurel crown. It's really a witch's curse.

150 من الأمل

Amazing Grace, his fame still endures

Has there ever been, even now, a more instantly recognisable, more renowned or monumental a figure in the realms of sport than William Gilbert Grace, who was born 150 years ago today? I doubt it; and yet he came and went long before the days of television and unlimited photography.

The gates at Lord's that bear his name and date from 1923 carry the simple inscription, "The Great Cricketer", the emphasis on the definite article being, as it were, understood. To his contemporaries he was "The Champion", as Alfred Mynn had been before him and no one has since. Jack Hobbs was to become "The Master", and no one has struck greater fear into the hearts of bowlers than "The Don", as Sir Donald Bradman is still known the world over; but it was W.G. who put cricket on the map.

Such was his pre-eminence that when the fixtures for 1898 were being put together, the committee of MCC arranged for the Gentlemen against the Players, the foremost match of the season, to start on July 18, the great man's birthday.

At the meeting of the county secretaries the previous December, it had been agreed that July 18, 19 and 20, should be kept free of all other cricket, and, although the first day of the match fell on a Monday, 17,423 paid to watch it, as well as a pavilion full to the eaves with members. From the West Country, home of the Graces, came special trains. "Most important of all," *Wisden* said, "the cricket was entirely worthy of the occasion."

When, eventually, W.G. retired, after one last appearance in his 61st year, for the Gentlemen of England against Surrey at the Oval, it was 44 years since he had made his first appearance in "big" cricket. In only his second match, a few days short of his sixteenth birthday, he scored 170 and 56 not out for the South Wales Club against the Gentlemen of Sussex, and within a year he was established as one of the leading cricketers of the day.

Although over-zealous bowling had just been legalised (June 10, 1864) round-arm was still very much in vogue; every stroke had to be run out, there being no boundaries, and the pitch at Lord's was so rough that the only respect in

John Woodcock celebrates the 150th anniversary of the birth of the first cricketer to become a household name

which it was said to resemble a billiard table was in the pockets. Nothing makes it more obvious as to how wonderful a batsman W.G. must have been than the way he was able to dominate bowlers on pitches that, from the early years of his career, were seldom even rolled. By the time he was 20 he was already a household name. He brought new dimensions to the art of batting. He was not so much a graceful batsman as a powerfully effective one.

Before him, batsmen were either front-foot players or back-foot players or sloggers or stickers. Grace united in his mighty self all the good points of all the good players and made utility the criterion of style... He turned the old one-stringed instrument into a many-chorded lyre. "That was Prince Ranjitsinhji, the greatest stylist of them all, in *The Jubilee Book of Cricket*."

W.G. was the rock on which the modern game was founded. He was a huge, imperishable, inimitable catalyst. He bestrode the half-century of years in which cricket developed from being a seasonal, fairly primitive, mostly rural pastime, beset by gamblers, into a fashionable, far-fitting game synonymous with respectability.

Although, because he scored 54,896 first-class runs and is invariably pictured with a bat in his hand, the popular image of him is as a batsman, he also took 2,864 wickets and held 875 catches. As a bowler, he started at medium pace before turning to something less energetic but more cunning, delivered with a low arm. Like Ian Botham a century later, though at a very different pace, he would



'As well as his batting feats he took 2,864 wickets and 875 catches'

post two long legs and watch the batsmen put their heads in the noose.

In the field, in his later years, he was inevitably inactive, though as a young man he was no mean athlete. In 1866, he took time off from the match between England and Surrey at the Oval, in which he had scored 224 not out on the first day, to win the quarter-mile hurdle race at the National Olympian Association meeting at the Crystal Palace. But by the time he made a thousand runs in May at the age of 47 he was 18st, and, apart from him, only Warwick Armstrong, of Australia, and Colin Milburn, of England, have played Test cricket at that weight.

His stamina and enthusiasm were, of course, legendary. In one spell of eight days in 1876 (August 12 to 19), he scored 344 for MCC against Kent at Canterbury, 177 for Gloucestershire against Nottinghamshire at Clifton and 318 for Gloucestershire against Yorkshire at Cheltenham, besides bowling 68 overs (four-ball) and spending most of one day travelling. "About this time, when I was scoring freely in almost every match," he wrote, "bowlers did not conceal their reluctance to keep on a bowling when I was batting. All sorts of excuses were made by them when they were asked to go on."

The son of a country doctor, he followed in the profession, the only man, it was drolly said, to become a doctor of medicine on account of successful operations carried out on the cricket field. The fact that he began his medical training in 1867 and found time to score 60 first-class hundreds before qualifying

in 1879 is a clear enough indication of his priorities. But what sort of a person was he?

In the present edition of *Wisden*, he is tilted at for having been a cheat, a money-grabber and something of a Philistine. It is not at all a felicitous piece and bears no relation to the many tributes that appeared in the *Wisden* of 1916, the year after his death, which is among the most sought-after editions of the almanack.

That he was a gamesman in the Stephen Potter sense ("the art of winning without actually cheating") is not in question. Many are the stories which vouch for that. He was also unashamedly mercenary. Although an amateur by designation, he made a great deal of money from the game, as, to a lesser extent, did many another amateur until all first-class cricketers were put on the payroll in 1963. But a part of W.G.'s charm must surely have been that, at heart, he was such a rascal. Those who knew him loved him for it. Sammy Woods described him, with avowed affection, as an "artful old rodder".

Sir Pelham Warner, who knew him well and went in first with him in Gentlemen v Players and North v South matches, cautioned against denigration. "He was a most lovable, charming and kindly personality, and do not believe those little inferences that he was not," he wrote.

"In the religion that was cricket, W.G. stood next to the Deity," Clement Attlee, Prime Minister from 1945 to 1951, said. On the centenary of his birth, the Grace Gates at Lord's, where, together with Diana, Princess of Wales, he will be remembered today, were adorned with laurels. At Lord's alone, he scored a staggering total of 12,690 runs and took 654 wickets.

I am not sure how much he would have liked the game as it is played now. If, say, Curly Ambrose had bowled him a bouncer, he would not have got very far by protesting "Whatever ye at, young fellow? Whatever ye at?" as he did when Ernest Jones fired one through his beard at Sheffield Park in 1896.

It is hard to imagine Curly saying, as "Jonah" did, "Sorry doctor, she slipped"—and perish the thought of the doctor in a helmet. In one of those, he might never have achieved the immortality that he did.



W.G. in typical pose at the crease. An assured champion, challenging bowlers to do their worst

World's finest pay double tribute

ALL nine Test-playing countries are represented at Lord's today within two glittering teams that have been put together in the name of charity. It will not be the most competitive match of the summer, but all 30,000 seats will be filled for one of those glamorous occasions that cricket still presents better than its competitors.

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial match was announced, by Roger Knight, the secretary of MCC, in the immediate aftermath of her death last year, but the day has since been augmented by a more authentic cricket link, the 150th anniversary of the birth of W.G. Grace.

While Grace is being celebrated by a match in Victorian costume on the Cheltenham College ground today, the two teams at Lord's will be playing for the W.G. Grace Trophy, donated by Waterford Crystal. It will be, however, one of those increasingly rare days when winning is not the most important thing.

There will be sentiment and nostalgia in abundance and the appeal of the day is such that every ticket was sold even before the teams had been finalised, MCC members and the London set once more proving that if cricket interest is declining in other parts of the country, Lord's remains immune.

If there was a risk of anti-climax, of players renegeing to protect injuries or prepare for forthcoming international events, it has been avoided. Other than Shane Warne, who has recently undergone shoulder surgery, the teams are as chosen and even Allan Donald, who hobbled heroically through the Old Trafford Test match a fortnight ago on a sore heel, will be in action.

Donald and Glenn McGrath constitute a formidable new-ball pairing for the MCC side to be led by Michael Atherton. Javagal Srinath and Anil Kumble, the Indian pair, give Atherton an enviable hand of bowlers, but he will need them all against as breathtaking an array of attacking batsmen as can have been assembled.

The Rest of the World side in opposition is led by Sachin Tendulkar and also includes such tearaways as Saeed Anwar, Sanath Jayasuriya and Aravinda de Silva, not to mention Graeme Hick and Tom Moody, the Worcestershire pair. It is not, by definition, a day for attrition but, in any case, the crowd should have no fears of boredom.

MCC: M.A. Atherton (capt), Aamer Sohail, S Chandrasekhar, M.Ashraffuddin, S.C. Ganguly, B.M. Makhani, I.A. Healy, A. Kumble, J. Srinath, A.A. Donald, G.D. McGrath.
REST OF THE WORLD: S.R. Tendulkar (capt), Saeed Anwar, S.T. Jayasuriya, P.A. de Silva, G.A. Hick, T.M. Moody, A. Flower, G.L. Carter, Wasim Akram, Muziq Ahmed, I.R. Bishop.

Physio who went to war over Cork

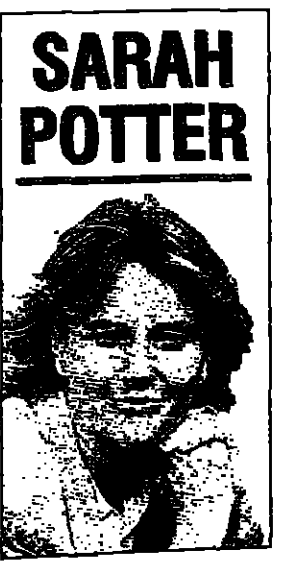
Women took centre stage at Derby on Wednesday as England and Australia batted and bowled in kit the colour of nursery rhymes. Behind the scenes, though, the female touch has long since been vital to the wellbeing of this county because Ann Brentnall has been the first-team physio-therapist for four years.

Not that it has always been a storybook success. Last season, when Dominic Cork's injuries ruled him out for almost an entire summer, the fracture of big egos at Derbyshire became so splintered that Brentnall threatened to pick up her plasters and leave.

"I couldn't have got much worse, because it was so public and negative," she said. "I was certainly in the depths of despair and quite a few of the players were, too. I handed in my notice, but I was talked out of it by the president of the club. I realised that the way to show people we are a professional set-up was to get on and do a proper job."

It is what Brentnall is good at and why the players wanted her to stay. Her judgment that Cork's hip and groin injuries, which eventually required surgery, were serious enough to prevent him from bowling for Derbyshire, from bowling for Derbyshire, was not accepted by the Australian duo, Les Stillingman, the coach, and Dean Jones, the captain.

"That was a unique situation, because normally there



is good communication about injuries and what to do," she said. "If the coach is in conflict with you, it causes extra pressure because they are trying to make you change your mind. Then they select someone who you have said shouldn't play and expect you to pick up the pieces when more damage has been done."

Some of that damage was to Cork's reputation. The inference was that he did not want to play. "It became very upsetting," Brentnall said. "People thought they knew Dominic because they read about him in the papers. He came out in the papers, whereas in fact he is badly, whereas in fact he is passionate about cricket and will always lift the team."

Brentnall, 48, admits that

being older helped her to cope. "Physios will always listen," she said. "Being accepted means that players do bring you into their confidence. Being a mum of three has helped me in the job because the players don't get embarrassed talking to me and you realise how vulnerable they are."

Changing-room banter does not faze her. Sometimes they forget I'm here, because they'll say something and then apologise. I'd rather they didn't say sorry, but at least it shows they have respect. Occasionally, they try to shock, but I just say I'll leave them to it. It's easy when you've been around a long time."

Cork is now the captain of Derbyshire, back playing well for England, and a sense of unity has returned to the club's dressing-room. "We have a lot of characters here and last season has made everyone much closer-knit," she said. "It has made people realise that talking things through and not title-tattling, is the best way. We've been much more professional."

Professional includes attention to diets and training methods. The physio is no longer there simply for when things go wrong. "It's much more preventative now," Brentnall said. "I like to watch

work, warm-ups, stretching and cool-downs together."

She also monitors their fat percentages and fluid intake. "If someone is carrying too much fat, I'm the one to advise them to lose weight," she said. "You can be brutal with some of them, others get upset or angry and I had one player who told me he needed his weight for his strength."

Brentnall copied the adage pinned to the door of manager Jim Smith's office at nearby Derby County Football Club, where Helen, 21, her daughter, works as a sports therapist. "Hard work will always beat talent if talent doesn't work hard." She popped it into the dressing-room, to mark a new beginning.

'Players were in depths of despair'

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CRICKET: GATTING BAGS A PAIR AS MIDDLESEX GO DOWN TO RECORD DEFEAT AT HANDS OF METROPOLITAN RIVALS

Surrey maintain hot pace in championship race



Bicknell: impressive

GUILDFORD (third day of four): Surrey (20pts) beat Middlesex (4pts) by 280 runs

THERE was a delicious moment at Woodbridge Road yesterday when Mark Ramprakash steered a ball from Alex Tudor towards the third-man boundary and Adam Holloake and Alec Stewart took off in hot pursuit from the slips.

Stewart, who sees no problem in being England's captain, leading batsman and wicketkeeper. He would happily tackle the 100 metres and the triple jump at the next Olympics if he had the time.

absence of the injured Thorpe, they have proved that they have the reserves to keep up the momentum. Then there was the pace with which they batted Middlesex completely out of the match yesterday. They were already 370 ahead when they resumed on 335 for eight, and Salisbury, who completed his third half-century of the season, and Tudor, revealing a fine range of strokes in his 41, added 83 in 90 minutes for the ninth wicket.

rest was entirely predictable. It took Salisbury, who has not had much bowling lately because of a groin injury, a while to find his rhythm, but he had Nash smartly taken by Alistair Brown at slip in his fifth over. Dutch then sliced Saqlain to deep mid-off, and Middlesex had left with the defiance of Keith Brown, who finished unbeaten on 59.

Salisbury took four for 33, giving him 34 wickets this season at an average of 18, as Surrey handed Middlesex their biggest beating in terms of runs in these metropolitan encounters with 15 overs of the third day remaining. One final oddity. Has there ever been a match in which the top scorer in all four innings has had the same surname - Alistair Brown (5) and 79 for Surrey), Keith Brown (30) and 59 not out for Middlesex?

Clouds not allowed to darken the horizon in Lancashire

By BARNEY SPENDER

LYTHAM (final day of four): Lancashire (23pts) beat Worcestershire (6pts) by two wickets

A WONDERFUL game of cricket that was twisted, turned and bubbled up into a thrilling finale ended in high drama at Church Road when John Crawley and Ian Austin, in their differing styles, guided Lancashire home to a gripping victory, their fourth in a row, with just seven balls to spare.

Needing 281 to win from 74 overs, Lancashire appeared to have lost their chance when they lost three wickets in quick succession after tea, including that of Crawley, who made a fine 108. But, for the second time in the game, Austin and Warren Hegg dragged them back into contention.

They scampared their singles and bledged their boundaries as they clawed back the initiative. But they had more to contend with than the Worcestershire bowlers. With 36 needed off the last 12 overs with four wickets, including the limping Neil Fairbrother, in hand, a home win looked the most likely result, but the skies darkened and a sweep of cloud from the Irish Sea dropped a load of tropical proportions.

That appeared to be that. But, as quickly as the rain had arrived, so it blew over. Lancashire had lost five overs. Hegg and Chapple fell by the wayside but, with Fairbrother padded up in the pavilion, Austin's 44 ensured that their championship hopes remain alive.

The only slightly jarring note was that the chase came about through some joke bowling. It is a contemptible practice in principle, but with heavy rain delaying the start for an hour, it was for once vaguely justifiable.

There were no complaints from Tom Moody and Stuart Lampitt, who plundered 41 off 15 balls. Moody took advantage of two full tosses from Lloyd to complete his third championship century of the season and his fifth against Lancashire in 12 innings.

Crawley and Atherton began confidently, putting on 75 before England's finest attempted to cut a ball from Lampitt and edged to Moody at first slip.

Crawley, however, was in prime form as he became the first man to score two hundreds on the ground, his previous one coming against Surrey six years ago when he one half-century off the first ball of the innings which dropped short of short leg, but thereafter played with tremendous assurance in restoring his century off 145 balls. It was his second century of the season and suggested that if England are still looking for an opener, he might be the man.

At tea, with Lancashire well placed on 162 for three, a home win looked a certainty, but a good spell from Newport after the break altered the game once more. He removed Watkinson and Washin in his second over, then knocked over Crawley's leg stump to set up a fascinating finish.

Essex given a stay of execution by brave Law

By JACK BAILEY

SOUTHEND (third day of four): Kent, with all second-innings wickets in hand, need 155 runs to beat Essex

AT ABOUT 3.30pm yesterday the medical examiner and the undertakers were waiting in the wings. Essex looked dead on their feet. Stuart Law, their only apparent hope of avoiding early defeat, was on his way back to the pavilion with the second-innings score on 87 for six, and Essex were only 11 runs ahead of Kent.

The situation was not good, the prognosis just as gloomy. Yet Danny Law, unpredictable to the last, settled down, after a few alarms, to play a major role in ensuring at least that the last rites, if they take place, will do so today. He also made the only half-century of the match by an Essex batsman.

Runs were hard to come by all day. Kent had experienced difficulty in eking out their first-innings lead from the overnight 18 runs to the eventual advantage of 69. Their three remaining wickets lasted another 19 overs. In this time, Fleming's sensible innings came to an inglorious end with a catch to mid-on before he could reach his first championship half-century of the season.

Patel was left before following a period of lying doggo, and the end of some tall-end high jinks from Headley and McCague came when Such bamboozled Headley for a well-deserved third wicket. Loft, too, deserved credit for sticking to the last throughout 35 overs of unremitting toil.

At this stage of the game, Essex must have felt they were in with a small chance at least. However, it was not long before all rational observers were giving them no chance at all.

It was as if the early Essex batsmen had taken little trouble to analyse the technique necessary to survive on a



Brian Lara dispatches a delivery from Hampshire bowler Kevan James as he leads Warwickshire to a 225-run win

Hampshire show their two faces

By RUPERT COX

EDGBASTON (third day of four): Warwickshire (24pts) beat Hampshire (5) by 225 runs

AS THEY are so prone to, Hampshire gave a frustrating insight into their capabilities yesterday, bowling out Warwickshire for 157 in 64.4 overs but, by way of contrast, it only served to expose the flaws that saw them skittled out in less than 34 overs for a disreputable 80. Their travails in the field could not camouflage an inadequacy that allowed Warwickshire to sail to their first championship victory at Edgbaston since September last year.

A target of 306 in 136 overs on a well-used wicket was always beyond the visitors, given that Hampshire are missing Robin Smith, their captain, with a broken right index finger. Conceding a lead of 118 on first innings had all-but decided the match,

merely to be confirmed once Jason Loney was dislodged by the second ball of the innings, from Ed Giddins. Giddins then struck John Stephenson, the former Hampshire captain, a nasty blow on the cheek via the peak of his helmet, forcing him to retire hurt. Brian Lara introduced Ashley Giles and he immediately found sufficient purchase to remove Giles White and Dimitri Mascarenhas within three balls, before the tail fell away obligingly. An opportune moment, with the selectors meeting today, for Giles to collect match figures of nine for 57, in addition to a rampant 75.

The home team have lacked the solidity of Andy Moles to anchor their batting this summer, but it has been their depth that has undermined Hampshire. Not one of their top five batsmen passed 35 in

this match. By contrast Lara, with a championship average of 23, spooned a pull off Nixon McLean, his West Indies colleague, to mid-on. If they can shore up their batting, a new-ball pairing of Allan Donald and Ciddins will ensure that Warwickshire pose a serious threat next season.

Hampshire have plenty of options on all fronts, they have a plethora of seamers and batters but there must be some debate as to whether it is counter-productive. They are presently giving some second eleven cricket to Mark Richards, the 16-year-old son of Barry, while his father commutes on the Test series. With so many batsmen ahead of him it must be difficult to find him enough meaningful cricket. Too many players seem to get lost, clogging up the system, or simply clouding the issues. They are by no

Conditions fail to damp down Yorkshire

By RICHARD HOBSON

SCARBOROUGH (third day of four): Nottinghamshire, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, are 135 runs behind Yorkshire

THE loss of two sessions to rain is unlikely to prevent Yorkshire from earning a full quota of points from an increasingly one-sided fixture. After extending their lead to 172 on first-innings, they made early inroads into the Nottinghamshire top order second time around and, weather permitting, ought to complete the job today.

It says something for the attraction the Festival holds over the Scarborough public that around 1,500 folk waited through heavy rain and, equally frustrating, a lengthy drying process in sunshine, to watch play begin at 4.30.

The umpires, Nigel Plews and Chris Balderstone, had suffered verbal abuse from a section of the crowd when they decided at 3 o'clock to inspect again an hour later. They responded by inviting one of the more unruly youths to take a look at the damp area on the bowlers' run-ups.

As a public relations exercise this was entirely sensible because the extent of the problem was not visible from afar. Scarborough CC have improved the drainage system here, but suffered because a water hog sent from Headingley was broken. Byas elected not to declare and watched as Gough and Silverwood, swinging mightily on an occasionally even hitting the ball where they intended, helped to take the total to 406. Franks claimed all three wickets to finish with his second five-wicket haul in successive innings.

Gough had seen the ball move sufficiently to whet his appetite in the third over. Gallian nudged an outswinger to Blakey, and Afzaal top-edged a hook narrowly over the wicketkeeper. Afzaal perished in the first-innings in this fashion and ought to have learnt from it. Robinson thus came to the crease at eight for two, having arrived at ten for two on Wednesday. At his stage of cricketing life, he deserves better support than this.

Scotland tipped for title

By DAVID TOWNSEND

THE second European championship begins in The Hague today with the newly 'professional' Scotland squad hot favourites to take the title in a five-way contest with 1995 winners Ireland, the hosts, Denmark and an England ECB XI (David Townsend writes).

The impetus of qualifying for next year's World Cup has pushed the cautious Scottish Cricket Union towards professionalism but only to the extent of buying time off work for their best players.

Scotland improved their credibility by dispatching Worcestershire from the NatWest Trophy in June but gave a reminder of the task that lies ahead by losing at home to the England ECB XI - consisting of non-accepted, mainly minor county players - in the Triple Crown.

Coach Jim Love will expect no less than an appearance in next Saturday's final but will also be looking for further advances from promising young all-rounder Ian Stanger and seamer Craig Wright.

Ireland will have to defend their title without all but one of the batsmen that won the inaugural championship in Copenhagen.

Brilliant Lewis makes light of tall target

By JOHN THICKNESSE

LEICESTER (final day of four): Leicestershire (24pts) beat Northamptonshire (7) by four wickets

LEICESTERSHIRE slammed 204 off 19.1 overs to gain a sensational victory over Northamptonshire at Grace Road yesterday to sustain their challenge to Surrey at the top of the championship table. Vince Wells, who scored 58, and Chris Lewis, the captain, whose 71 not out came off only 33 balls, were special heroes of a day that, until its final 90 minutes, had been one of almost uninterrupted frustration.

Although unable to take the four wickets Northamptonshire had standing overnight until only 20 overs remained for play, the 1996 champions have their eyes set so firmly on the title that they went full-bloodedly for victory, even though they had to score at a rate of ten runs an over.

Wells, Darren Maddy and Phil Simmons gave them a devastating start, the openers plundering 16 off Devon Malcolm's first - and only - over, and 19 off that of Franklyn Rose. By the third over, bowled by Paul Taylor, Northamptonshire had nine men on the boundary.

Leicestershire were ahead of the asking-rate at 60 wickets down after five overs, of which Wells had made 44. Their wickets started falling, Maddy was run out in the sixth over, in the tenth, Simmons, after a raking straight six off Rose, was caught in the deep and and in the next Wells was out, with the total at 99.

Ben Smith and Paul Nixon had followed by the 13th over, but Lewis then clubbed 27 off six balls from Taylor and Rose. When Sutcliffe was injured by Rose off the last ball of the 16th over, Leicestershire were 167 for six, needing 37 to win off four overs but with the back of their task broken.

YESTERDAY'S SCOREBOARDS

Match	Score	Wickets
BRITANNIC ASSURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP		
Surrey v Middlesex	Surrey 20pts, Middlesex 4pts	280 runs
GUILDFORD (3rd day)	Surrey 20pts, Middlesex 4pts	280 runs
LEICESTERSHIRE v NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	Leicestershire 24pts, Northamptonshire 7pts	4 wickets
LEICESTER (4th day)	Leicestershire 204, Northamptonshire 19	19.1 overs
ESSEX v KENT	Essex 87, Kent 11	11 runs
SOUTHEND (3rd day)	Essex 87, Kent 11	11 runs
ESSEX (4th day)	Essex 87, Kent 11	11 runs
WARWICKSHIRE v HAMPSHIRE	Warwickshire 24pts, Hampshire 5pts	225 runs
EDGBASTON (3rd day)	Warwickshire 24pts, Hampshire 5pts	225 runs
YORKSHIRE v NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	Yorkshire 135, Nottinghamshire 8	8 wickets
SCARBOROUGH (3rd day)	Yorkshire 135, Nottinghamshire 8	8 wickets
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE (4th day)	Yorkshire 135, Nottinghamshire 8	8 wickets
LANCASHIRE v WORCESTERSHIRE	Lancashire 23pts, Worcestershire 6pts	2 wickets
LYTHAM (4th day)	Lancashire 23pts, Worcestershire 6pts	2 wickets
WORCESTERSHIRE (4th day)	Lancashire 23pts, Worcestershire 6pts	2 wickets



Crawley: century

Britannic
Unless team game
RUGBY LEAGUE
Edwards
war of wo

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Brittle may pay high price for lack of trust

David Hands, rugby correspondent, argues that the vote for chairmanship of the RFU must be one for progress and unity

WERE it not so sad and so serious for the future of rugby union in England, some of the preparations for the annual meeting of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham tomorrow would be laughable. What kind of body is it that can produce an annual report (official) and a chairman's report (unofficial) that, by inference, suggests no faith in those he is supposed to chair?

What kind of body produces individuals who hurl abuse at leading clubs for overpaying their players and setting the game on the road to ruin, and then hurls money at its own national team as though there was no tomorrow? It is

reliably reported that England cost the union (which, by its own admission, is "haemorrhaging" money) — and, therefore, the clubs and counties — £2.6 million last season, even before a further £1.25 million was paid out for the most disastrous summer tour in history.

How great now is the need for an outside organisation to examine the affairs of the RFU, in precisely the same manner adopted by the New Zealand Rugby Football Union five years ago with the Boston Report?

The absence of a chief executive since the resignation last August of Tony Hallett has meant a loss of focus. To whom do the professional directors report? To the manage-

ment board, to the chairman of the management board, all of whom are amateurs and not available to make day-to-day decisions?

As recently as two weeks ago Clive Woodward, the first full-time professional coach to the England team, was asked to whom he would report at the end of England's spiriting trail around the southern hemisphere. Woodward was not certain: the man directly responsible for his appointment, Fran Cotton, was no longer in

office, which left him with the options of Don Rutherford, the technical director, or Bill Beaumont, chairman of the national playing committee. This is the kind of uncertainty that has bedevilled the RFU and created a malaise throughout the game in England.

The question of responsibility, however, becomes lost amid the morass of accusations and counter-claims that have formed the substance of rugby politics since the 1997 annual meeting, when Cliff

Brittle was elected chairman of the management board.

In such circumstances Brittle, as chairman, deflects responsibility by claiming that he is being undermined by elements within the RFU council; he justifies his own, personal report on the year by saying that "due to political actions within the RFU, all facilities to communicate with the membership have been withdrawn if what I have to say is not agreed by the RFU council".

In a nutshell, Brittle encapsulates the problem: the absence of trust between the chair and the chaired. But it is a problem that extends to those with whom he has been most closely identified: Cotton, formerly vice-chairman (playing) of the management board, and Woodward. Cotton's contempt for the collective has often been transparent; Woodward has shown the same capability for personal decision-making in areas that are not his province.

This does not mean that none of the three has nothing to offer: Brittle's vision of the game, Rugby Restructure 2000, offers some radical concepts; Cotton's Club England does the same and Wood-

ward's mould-breaking coaching has a wonderfully youthful appeal. But they cannot operate in isolation, even though they appear, at times, to believe that they can.

Brittle's opponent tomorrow, Brian Baister, is an unknown quantity for most in the game. A vote for him tomorrow will be a stab in the dark, yet that seems now to be what the RFU membership is reduced to.

Brittle has been unable to bring unity and, thereby, progress on any front. If the alternative allows for proper, professional direction — not a game run by an amateur committee nor by constant reference to the membership in the name of democracy — then Baister must be given his chance.

Unless England team thrives, game will wither

Cliff Brittle presents his credentials for re-election as the reform candidate to drive through changes



Tomorrow's election is not about power or control for any individual. It is about policies for reform of the RFU to ensure English rugby is successful in the new millennium. World rugby wants and needs a successful England.

As an elected member of RFU committees for nine years, I have no doubt that major reform is necessary. The main reason we have fallen behind the southern hemisphere unions is that they have adopted change in their competition structures and introduced modern business methods. Although the RFU has a different culture, we must bring about our own form of change or we will become a second-class union in world terms.

The key and immediate issues to be addressed are:

1. We must create a successful England team in world rugby. The success of the England team is directly responsible for the financial success of the union. It creates the "feel-good factor" for recruitment and the finance for rugby to develop and expand at the grass roots. Without this success the game will wither. Every club in the RFU is affected.

2. There has to be root and branch change in the RFU's competition structures at all levels. At the top end, European competition for nationally qualified players is crucial for their development. It should not be acceptable to us that we are denied this development process for selfish reasons by the top clubs. We have a vital role to play in the European and international game. We must fulfil our responsibilities to other unions. Quality, not quantity, of competition is the only solution in order to reduce the number of games for our international players in any calendar year to 30. A British league may be one solution.

3. We must ensure our membership of the International Board is retained. The Mayfair Agreement jeopardises our membership. This is not scaremongering, it is fact. All clubs in membership of the RFU are bound to accept in totality all International Board and RFU rules and regulations. Neither the RFU, our member clubs, nor our players have any future outside the International Board.

4. Major reform of the RFU's constitutional rules should take place as soon as possible. The old fashioned ways of "grace and favour" should be brought to an end. They are no longer relevant in a modern, open, professional game. As a matter of

priority a constitutional commission should be set up, its membership drawn from experienced individuals from inside and outside the game and not from the RFU council. We need new and fresh ideas. The commission's report should be put to the membership for consideration within six months.

5. The RFU is too big and complex to be administered from the centre. Local, elected administration boards could be set up with real authority and financial resources from the RFU to manage the game in their areas. Working under the guidance of the RFU governing body, this would lead to quicker and better decision-making. They are a real alternative to the present management structure and will bring greater democratic accountability. The constituent bodies structures should remain in place, hopefully with some self-reform.

It is sad that this election, the third in 30 months, has been reduced by some to a smear campaign against certain individuals. This form of electioneering is unworthy of a great union like ours. The past two and a half years have been made very difficult for me, too much time has been spent firefighting. However despite these difficulties, there have been successes:

- The Five Nations Championship has been preserved and expanded.
- New financial controls have been introduced and are being monitored.
- Nationwide consultations have taken place.
- Major reform proposals have been published and I believe that there is now a general acceptance throughout the game for the need for change.

Our biggest enemies at this time may be apathy and lack of resolve which may prevent us from taking the game forward. We all want peace within the game, no one more than myself. If the membership wishes to have peace at all costs and resists a progression of change, then I will gladly step aside, as that future is not one in which I would wish to share. However, if the membership recognises the need for reform then I ask them to support me again, hopefully with a new team, so that I can continue the task of putting in place the necessary building blocks for an exciting future. I promise to continue to act in the best interests of all the memberships with openness, honesty and integrity.

Cliff Brittle is chairman of the RFU management board

'We all want peace, but not at all costs'



Woodward, the hard-pressed England coach, awaits the outcome

Rugby in need of fresh start and an end to conflict

Brian Baister argues that dialogue, not diktat, is the way to unity and rehabilitation in the sport



The decision of delegates attending the RFU agm tomorrow will have the most enormous consequences for the future of English rugby. It will decide whether we can start to unify and put our problems behind us, and begin the badly needed task of reconstruction in English rugby, or whether we must face another season of turmoil.

The way to solve our difficulties and disagreements is by dialogue, not diktat. English rugby has suffered the process of dogmatic insistence, a refusal to negotiate properly and a lack of trust for too long. We cannot afford to continue down this one-way street of confrontation and conflict. We must resolve our problems and start working together to ensure this unhappy period is quickly put behind us.

My long background of public service has given me the understanding, the patience and the determination to tackle such a task. For too long, English rugby has been riven with rancour and bad feeling. It is time for a fresh start and a beginning of the healing process. We have a workable agreement with our senior clubs. We have agreed to a maximum of 37 matches per season for our international players. This is still too many, but it is a big step in the right direction. The new player contracts will require the signatures of both the RFU and the club, and thus the players' availability for England is secure, as is unrestricted access to players to monitor injuries.

All of this and more is in the Mayfair Agreement. It must be supported because it is a significant step towards bringing the game back together. There is still much to do. We must get our best clubs back into European competition and we must help them to raise their standards to that of the southern-hemisphere Super 12. I fully support Bill Beaumont when he says that we must never even consider sending international teams away at anything other than full strength.

It is worth emphasising that the Mayfair Agreement also includes the release of international players at the end of the forthcoming season. In May 1999, until after the World Cup is complete in November. That is surely as big an opportunity as any England coach could desire.

The media has given coverage in recent days to the discussion between the RFU and the International Board. The RFU has made its position clear. The RFU and the clubs have agreed to accept RFU regulations and those of the IRB. The clubs have, however, questioned the validity of certain regulations under the

European law. While this may be considered regrettable, the RFU cannot remove from the club the right that has been conferred upon them by virtue of the UK's membership of the European Union, which prevails over RFU regulations and, indeed, English law.

The RFU has taken legal advice and has concluded that the Mayfair Agreement is not in breach of existing IRB regulations. I support the RFU stance on the Mayfair Agreement and International Board regulations. My opponent at tomorrow's election has chosen to distance himself. I believe that such a move makes his position as chairman untenable.

Nearly 60 per cent of the RFU Council were elected since the game went open. They are democratically elected representatives. Cliff Brittle wants to span the RFU Council, which is effectively the conscious of the game, and run the union with a small group of appointed people responsible only once a year to the agm. While we need professional staff under a chief executive to run the union, and a small group of elected people to make policy recommendations, we need the Council to preserve democracy and ensure that the game is run to the benefit of all parties.

As many people will know, I have a long background in junior club rugby and I pledge never to ignore or undermine the vast majority of our membership. I have already promised to try to restore the 30 per cent cut in the grant to clubs which has occurred in the past year.

In terms of rugby below the Premier League, I am pleased in my capacity as chairman of the Clubs, Counties and Divisions Committee to have been able to persuade the RFU Council to recommend that the Tedley's Bitter championship should include all clubs up to Jewson National League One. The championship will begin during Easter 1999 and conclude at Twickenham on May 22. For the first time in many years the county championship will have a real purpose.

I find wherever I go a weariness with this attrition, a deep frustration that differences cannot be buried. Why is it, I am asked, that a sport which has produced so many people of outstanding ability and character cannot now present a dignified, unified face to the outside world? Why indeed? As Albert Einstein once wrote: "Peace cannot be maintained by force. It can only be achieved through understanding." How true.

Brian Baister is a member of the RFU Council

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RUGBY LEAGUE

Edwards enters war of words

LIKE the pre-flight vitriol of hovers to drum up ticket sales, Shaun Edwards and Graeme Bradley have obliged by taking verbal slugs at one another ahead of the JJB Super League excursion to Edinburgh tonight (Christopher Irvine writes). The robust nature of these exchanges would delight Don King.

Bradley, the Bradford Bulls captain, called Edwards, now back at London Broncos, a "bad apple" and said that team spirit improved when he left Odsal last month because he had not fitted into the Bradford's style. Edwards replied: "I have no respect whatsoever for Graeme Bradley. I think everyone in rugby league realises what he's like. He's ill-mannered and I don't want to stoop to his depth."

Around 4,000 Bradford supporters are in danger of outnumbering local people at Newcastle, where a Great Tyneside international against Britain international against Australia was staged in 1911. The Edwards-Bradley confrontation is a sideshow worthy of an entrance fee. Not £12, which looks like exploiting, rather than trying to assist, native enthusiasm.

Bradford's development team has done excellent work in coaching more than 400 children and working with clubs in the new Scotland amateur league. The one pity is that the only Scotsman, Nick Marston, the London full back, with whom neutrals could have identified, is nursing a back injury.

Edwards, whose winning return for the Broncos against Hull Sharks ended a sequence of three heavy defeats, said: "It was very easy settling back because the mainstay of the players were still there. I was determined to do well in the first game, but we know it will be a much bigger challenge in the second. Bradford are probably the only ones who can challenge Wigan at the can challenge Wigan at the moment. I didn't get on well at Edinburgh with Bradley, but Bradford with Bradley, but Bradford are probably the best club I've been involved with."

The Edinburgh game will complete a 600-mile round-trip weekend journey for the Super League, after last night's game in Northampton between Sheffield Eagles and Halifax Blue Sox.

IN THE days before the Wales rugby union fly-half factory ceased production, Iestyn Harris would admire the genius of Barry John, Phil Bennett and Jonathan Davies. Although born and steeped in rugby league in Oklahoma, his generic roots were never forgotten.

Harris's grandfather, Norman, a miner, trod the northerly path from Newbridge to sign professional forms with Oldham War. Paul, his son, grew up playing amateur league for Saddleworth, where Iestyn's shining talent quickly came to the attention of Warrington.

The name resonates Welshness, even if the accent is earthy Lancastrian. "My parents are Welsh. I feel totally Welsh," Harris said. "There's quite a bit of swapping and changing of national allegiances in league, but I just don't feel English." In a similar way, when he entered a predominantly Welsh-speaking Wales team at the age of 18, he briefly questioned his authenticity. "Back in 1994, Anthony Sullivan and myself were the only ones not born in Wales and not from union. But I was immediately welcomed and the whole atmosphere was charged. You couldn't help but be swept along," he said.

If the Welsh howl is present, then so, too, are the reactions, lightness of touch and derring-do associated with the Celtic half back mould. Like John, Bennett and Davies, Harris has an unnerving calm and ability to compress so much into so little time. Unlike them, he brings a physical presence.

The union contingent has gone, leaving mostly sons and grandsons of Welshmen to carry the flag against Emerging England at Widnes tomorrow, which marks the Wales team's re-emergence after two years. "The 'emerging' bit is disappointing," Harris said. "It's only three years ago that we beat the full England side in winning the European championship and played them in the 1995 World Cup semi-finals." It was not just in league that Harris was seen as heir apparent to Jonathan Davies, from whom he devoured knowledge at Warrington. After he was named international player of the year in 1995, union clubs began to court him.

Harris does not discount the idea: he has regularly said that he would love a Wales union cap. "I'm very much a league player," he said. "I've never played union at any level, so it's strange when people talk about me and union when I don't even know the rules properly."

At 22, Harris is settled, for the immediate future, at Leeds Rhinos, who paid Warrington a club record £325,000 in April 1997 and did not see anything like the best of him witnessed so far this season. Nine troubled months on the transfer list at Warrington had eroded his confidence: "This year, under Graham Murray, the Leeds coach, he has been given the captaincy and a free hand. Harris is occasionally too laid-back for his own good. He feels he plays better when he has a smile on his face and for Leeds, his dazzling step, outstanding kicking game and smart finishing from full back have been hallmarks of their improvement this season. A less cheerful Harris, especially one niggled by injuries, can be less of a proposition."

If Iestyn is smiling tomorrow, Wales can anticipate something special. Such is the shortage of British talent in that role, the desire for him to succeed extends to Andy Goodway, the England coach, with Great Britain's autumn series against New Zealand in both his thoughts and those of Harris.



Harris, the Leeds Rhinos captain, holds on to union roots

Women relishing freedom and chance to make an impact granted by revival of a lost art

Welcome side-effects put riders in control

There are some writers whose greatest pride is the absolute surefire, knock-you-dead quality of their opening sentence, or paragraph. So, in deference to the — journalistically, rather dated — cult of the intro, I offer you a choice.

a) There is an old joke in which a Frenchman and an Englishman see a woman pass by on a horse. "What a beautiful woman," says the Frenchman. "What a beautiful horse," says the Englishman. For once, I felt the European and the Englishman within me unite in perfect harmony.

b) I have done some surreal things in my time, but the afternoon I spent riding side-saddle with the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, was something of a collector's item.

I was invited up to Pittern Hill Stables in Warwickshire by the Side Saddle Association, and more or less the first thing I set eyes on was Clarissa Dawson, the side-saddle rider of the year last year, mounted on a rather splendid grey, manifestly side-saddle and in full slap and drag.

It is one of the facts of life and of mythology that women and horses go well together. The horse life is filled with women: the highest achievers, the most ordinary everyday leisure riders. I have heard the opinion expressed that there is something not quite right about horse ladies. *Au contraire*, I assure you.

There is an endearing craziness about side-saddle people. What's the point of it all? None, really, but if you start looking for a point in everything you do, you are going to lead a very impoverished life. There is no point in horses, if you take that attitude. A car will get you there so much quicker.

In every walk of life, you meet the nutcase who pushes things just a little bit too far. You find rifle-shooters who don't believe that the ammunition-makers know their job and that they can only be properly served by ammunition they make themselves. In bird-watching, you meet people with the most fantastic optical equipment. Sometimes they are very good at recognising birds. Side-saddle riding is a bit like these extreme types. It is absurd, yes, but what the hell's wrong with that? It

is also beautiful, and that is enough to be going on with.

Now I bet you thought that side-saddle was an instrument of oppression, an archaic implement based on an outmoded modesty. Bringing back side-saddle is like bringing back the chastity belt. But if you thought in those terms, you could not be more wrong. Before the invention of the side-saddle, women simply sat on horses sideways. Hard to stay on, almost impossible to control your horse. You needed someone else to lead.

The side-saddle offered not repression but freedom. It gave women not further chains, but real control. In a proper side-saddle you can gallop and jump, and if the horse should throw a few bucks and the odd stand, you are probably in a better position to deal with the problem than a rider astride.

Demure it ain't. It's rather dashing. But you have got to be rather in love with the gear, with the tack and the clothes both. It is not everybody's cup of tea, but the horse world offers more different sorts of cups of tea than any other branch of sport. There are few

SIMON BARNES Talking horse



things more lovely than perfect turn-out — provided that someone else has done the brushing and the plaiting of the mane. Pull side-saddle turn-out is dramatic. But you must know how to ride. A perfect riding position is vital.

Dawson rides tall in the saddle, shoulders well back. There is nothing remotely modest about a woman riding a horse, even if she is wearing riding habit, top hat, Edwardian cut-away riding jacket, waistcoat,

high stock and, of course, veil. It is to-die-for gear, and if you want surefire, knock-you-dead impact, this is the horse sport for you. "The really difficult thing is to drink a gin and tonic through the veil," Dawson said. "The only answer is to sink all pride and use a straw." I felt better for learning this.

And no, I was not joking about the King's Troop boys. There were three of them: the former master saddler, the present instructor, and his heir apparent. Saddlers are a different kind of nut. They, too, are gear maniacs. The construction and fitting of the saddle is to them an unending source of fascination. So it should be. Saddlery is both crucial and appalling-

ly difficult, and it takes a certain mind-set to grasp the task. Obsession is merely the starting point. Which is why the boys were here.

The Troop used to have a female vet, who, on ceremonial occasions, was required to ride side-saddle. Fascinated by the challenge, by an entire new range of saddlery, by a complete new set of gear, the saddlers were agog to learn more.

First point: a side-saddle is not at all insecure. Side-saddle riders, schooling a crazed youngster, have been known to wish that they had a decent chance to fall off. Second point: the position is not unnatural and twisted. You keep your shoulders and hips in line with the horse, just as you do when riding astride. It is rather like sitting with your right ankle on your knee: not modest, but easy and natural.

The two posts on the saddle, one for each leg, hold you in place. Riding is not about clever positions, it is about understanding the mind and the movements of your horse. If you can ride one way, you can ride another.

It had its day, side-saddle riding. I was shown an ancient point-to-point side-saddle, with it, no longer was it rude for a lady to point-to-point. But, after the war, side-saddles were consigned to attics across the country. Riding astride was no longer considered *arriviste* and unladylike, and the art was, if not lost, certainly mislaid.

But the revival was inevitable. Just as at Bisleigh, you find nutcases with black-powder weapons, and on the road you find other nuts with perfectly tuned Bugattis, so the side-saddle revival had to come. The Side Saddle Association was formed in 1974 and goes from strength to strength.

It is both gorgeous and crazy. It is just one other way of enjoying horses, and I don't have any problem with that. "You did really well," Dawson said. "Have you done much side-saddle riding before?" Well, really, of all the left-handed compliments I've ever been given...

The 1998 Side Saddle Show will be held at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire, on August 7 to 9.



Riding side-saddle is not only safe, it also enables Dawson to enjoy a dashing appearance



The veil means that gin and tonics are drunk through a straw

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RACING: EPSOM TRAINER HAS WELCOME DOUBLE WITH IMANI AND CARLTON AT NEWBURY



Imani, a 16-1 chance, initiated a double for Lewis by winning the White Horse Fillies' Handicap at Newbury yesterday

Lewis delights in winning excuse

By RICHARD EVANS RACING CORRESPONDENT
However, she turned the ten-furlong race into a procession once she hit the front three furlongs from home. Lewis has had a disappointing season and Imani was only his fourth winner this term, hence the delight at the headmaster's study - unless you are Geoff Lewis.
It is a lovely feeling to be asked in for a change, the Epsom handler said as he received the call after the surprise victory of Imani in the White Horse Fillies' Handicap at Newbury yesterday.
The three-year-old filly had failed to make the frame in any of her previous starts and, as a result, punters allowed her to go off at 16-1 on the Tote.

Xaar misses comeback race

XAAR has been set to use tomorrow's race as a stepping-stone to next month's Juddmonte International Stakes at York, a group one race sponsored by his owner. The son of Zafonic, trained by André Fabre, was officially rated the best two-year-old in Europe last season after his seven-length win in the Dewhurst Stakes and started odds-on for the Guineas after a successful reappearance in the Craven Stakes.
The Henry Cecil-trained St James's Palace Stakes winner Dr Fong (Kieren Fallon) is now left with only three rivals tomorrow, as Evening World and Barba also taken out yesterday.
The main danger appears to be Special Quest, winner of the group two Prix Noailles in April, who has since been in the frame in the Prix Lupin and Grand Prix de Paris.

RIPON

Table with columns for THUNDERER, GOING: GOOD TO FIRM, DRAW: 5F-6F, LOW NUMBERS BEST. Includes race 2.35 CENTAUR SELLING STAKES and race 3.05 BERNADETTE MCWILLIAMS MEMORIAL MAIDEN STAKES.

NOTTINGHAM

Table with columns for THUNDERER, GOING: GOOD TO FIRM, DRAW: 6F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST. Includes race 2.20 GROUP DISCOUNTS SELLING HANDICAP and race 2.50 EAST MIDLAND COMMERCIALS MAIDEN FILLES STAKES.

3.35 LEEDS HOSPITAL FUND HANDICAP

Table for race 3.35 LEEDS HOSPITAL FUND HANDICAP with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

3.25 EAST MIDLAND COMMERCIALS HANDICAP

Table for race 3.25 EAST MIDLAND COMMERCIALS HANDICAP with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

4.10 RIPON BELL-RINGER HANDICAP

Table for race 4.10 RIPON BELL-RINGER HANDICAP with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

4.00 NOTTINGHAM ROYALS NORTH SOUTH CHALLENGE SERIES

Table for race 4.00 NOTTINGHAM ROYALS NORTH SOUTH CHALLENGE SERIES with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

4.40 FORTÉ HOTELS (YORKSHIRE) MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES

Table for race 4.40 FORTÉ HOTELS (YORKSHIRE) MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

4.30 RACING CHANNEL AVAILABLE ON DIAMOND

Table for race 4.30 RACING CHANNEL AVAILABLE ON DIAMOND with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

5.10 M S SOCIETY MAIDEN HANDICAP

Table for race 5.10 M S SOCIETY MAIDEN HANDICAP with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

5.00 MAINLAND RATING RELATED MAIDEN STAKES

Table for race 5.00 MAINLAND RATING RELATED MAIDEN STAKES with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

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6.35 FEMALE APPRENTICES HANDICAP

Table for race 6.35 FEMALE APPRENTICES HANDICAP with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

8.05 EBF LAST MINUTE CLASSIFIED STAKES

Table for race 8.05 EBF LAST MINUTE CLASSIFIED STAKES with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

7.05 MINTX HANDICAP

Table for race 7.05 MINTX HANDICAP with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

8.35 ASHORE SELLING HANDICAP

Table for race 8.35 ASHORE SELLING HANDICAP with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

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9.05 SWELL CLASSIFIED STAKES

Table for race 9.05 SWELL CLASSIFIED STAKES with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

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Table for Ayr racing results including 7.25 ALSA CRAIG NURSERY HANDICAP and 7.55 HOURS OF AYR CLASSIFIED STAKES.

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6.25 EBF MAIDEN STAKES

Table for race 6.25 EBF MAIDEN STAKES with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

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Table for Sky racing results including 6.25 EBF MAIDEN STAKES and 6.55 ISLE OF ARRAN SELLING HANDICAP.

6.55 ISLE OF ARRAN SELLING HANDICAP

Table for race 6.55 ISLE OF ARRAN SELLING HANDICAP with details on horses, jockeys, and odds.

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Table for Sky racing results including 6.55 ISLE OF ARRAN SELLING HANDICAP and 7.15 MANNY BERNSTEIN CREDIT DIVISION HANDICAP.

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Table for Redcar racing results including 6.15 Tapach, 6.45 Slocree, 7.15 Mondragon, 7.45 Penitence, 8.15 Desert Fighter, 8.45 Caga Aux Folles.

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Cambridge Flying Group's war-veteran Tiger Moth is the type of machine most pilots used to learn on. Now Cambridge is the only place that uses them for training. The cockpit, top right, is sparse, cold and tiny, and the starting system archaic

Smitten by the magic of old Moths

Eve-Ann Prentice takes to the skies with the old school — the last place in Britain you can get your pilot's licence in a primitive Tiger Moth biplane

Imagine being asked to attempt to fly an aeroplane that has no brakes, no heating, and a fuel gauge that consists of a glass tube sticking out of the tank with notches marked on it. Now imagine being asked to go to war in it.

The aircraft is a 1938 Tiger Moth which saw active service with the British Expeditionary Force Communications Squadron in France during the Second World War.

Such aircraft saw the ill-fated attempt to halt Germany's Blitzkrieg through northern France in 1940, which ended in defeat for the BEF, the loss of many of the RAF's precious frontline aircraft, and the evacuation at Dunkirk.

But in addition to its role as a communications aircraft, the little biplane is more famous for being the aircraft that took countless numbers of future British and Commonwealth wartime fighter and bomber pilots on their first tentative solo trips into the skies.

Now the wire-and-canvas biplane is being used to train a new generation of pilots, at the only flying school in the country that teaches pupils from scratch in these magnificent flying machines.

They say that if you can fly a

"tail-dragger" — an old-fashioned plane equipped with a tailwheel instead of the nosewheel-equipped tricycle undercarriage that you now see on everything from light aircraft to passenger jets — you can fly anything.

I was about to discover why, when I was offered a chance to have a go on the Moth at the school run by the Cambridge Flying Group at the airport on the edge of the city.

The first thing you climb into is not the cockpit, but a dark green flying suit that helps to combat the wind and, much more importantly, is equipped with enough pockets and pouches to accommodate all the maps and other paraphernalia you need in a cockpit with less storage space than a Filofax.

After climbing aboard, and with four-point harness secure and latches that look as though they would be more at home on a motorcycle sidcar in place, you look up and realise why men go weak at the knees at the prospect of handling this creature.

The wind in the wires and struts croons at you, while some brave soul stands in front and swings the propeller in an attempt to fill the engine's combustion chamber with

enough fuel to start the engine (this is the equivalent of using a starting handle on a vintage car).

As the pilot, you flick the magnet to switches mounted on the outside of the fuselage, call "contact" like some hero from a Biggles film and, after the engine thrubs and shakes into life, use a hand signal to indicate "chocks away".

Contrary to popular belief, no one actually uses this time-worn phrase since the engine noise would drown it out. But the chocks are not there for their poser value — they are a necessity. The aircraft has no brakes, so the wooden chocks must be wedged in front of the Tiger Moth's wheels or the plane will leap forward when the engine starts and probably send the poor chap who has just helped to start the engine.

After learning to fly on modern, user-friendly and superbly equipped Piper Warriors at Oxford, taking the controls of a Tiger Moth was like driving a vintage

Lagonda after becoming used to a Ford Escort. It is extremely noisy and draughty, but also beguiling and exhilarating.

Taxing this aircraft is a revelation. The pilot sits in the rear cockpit (for reasons of balance as well as ability to see the crude but effective fuel gauge), and the aircraft sits well back on its haunches until let loose on the runway during its take-off roll.

This means that you can't see anything ahead without weaving the aircraft left and right and leaning out over the side of the cockpit to hazard a guess at where you are steering. This trait is even more interesting at the beginning of the take-off run, in the seconds before the tail lifts from the ground to let the fuselage skim parallel to the ground.

Then the wood-and-canvas bird flexes its muscles and the physics of flight take over. With two sets of wings, and no flaps — which on modern aircraft are used to slow

the machine down in the air — the speed with which the ground drops away is astonishing and you find yourself hundreds of feet aloft even before crossing the airfield boundary. "This is when you discover what your feet are for," says my instructor, Mike Derrett, via the intercom from the front seat — the only concession to modern technology aboard the aircraft.

Most training aircraft are extremely forgiving when you forget to use as much rudder as you ought, via the pedals at your feet. The rudder controls an aeroplane's yaw — its tendency to swivel right or left and therefore slide through the air sideways on — and in the Tiger Moth the effect makes the aircraft almost unflyable, unless you constantly but carefully squeeze the pedals like some sort of manic grape-treader.

Once up there, of course, you have to come down. Landing the Ti-

ger Moth gently enough, and at precisely the right angle to prevent it leaping back into the air, is an art that separates tail-dragger aviators from Sunday-driver pilots such as myself.

I have only come across one person who has managed to get the knack at first attempt — he is an airline pilot who had around 11,000 hours' flying time. The Cambridge Flying Group, which operates two pristinely maintained Tiger Moths, was founded in 1954 by Bill Ison, a former RAF pilot who flew Avro Lancasters and Bristol Blenheims during the war, and who at 78 still heads the instructors' team that puts about six people through their private pilot's licence test every year.

Kay Mason, a farmer's wife from Norfolk who has her own airstrip at home, and a classic Cessna C120 tail-dragger ready for when she qualifies, has had about 12 hours' instruction on Tiger Moths at the school.

"It can be very frustrating," she says. "You know what you should be doing, but then you fight it all the time and find you are not reacting fast enough. But that is the beauty, it is a real challenge." My father, who learnt to fly at

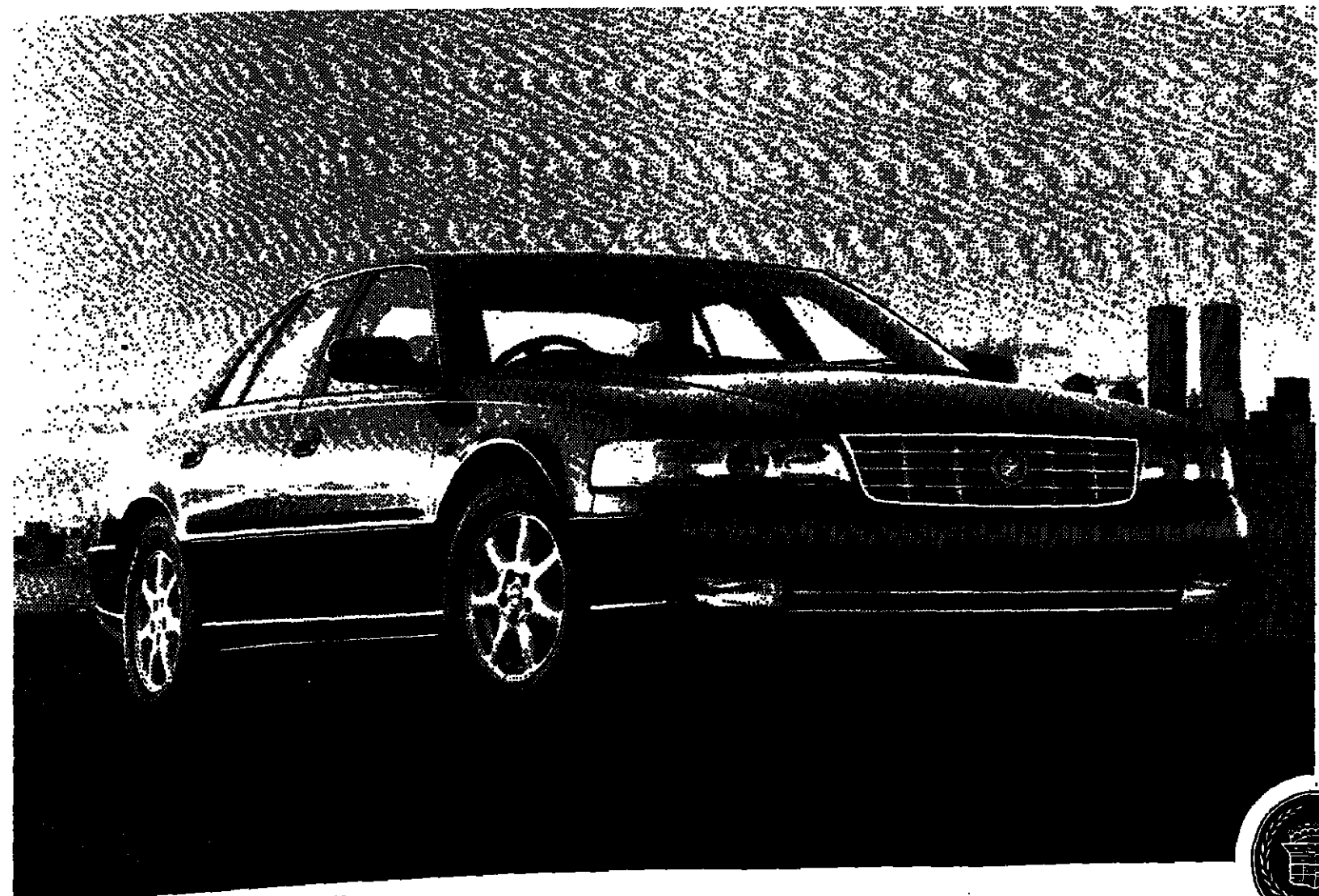
Cambridge more than 35 years ago, was curious to know the registration of the aeroplane I flew — G-AGEI. He checked his old logbooks and discovered he had made his first solo cross-country flight in the same machine in April 1962.

Perhaps one of the most telling signs of the Tiger Moth's derring-do ethos comes in the pilot's notes. Included under the heading "Abandoning Aircraft" comes the comforting exhortation to "slide over the side head-foremost and facing the tail". Learning to fly Tiger Moths with the Cambridge Flying Group costs £92.40 an hour plus £80 a year membership of the club.

Membership for shared-cost flying, where the passenger can split the £84.60-an-hour cost of hiring the aircraft with the pilot, costs £40 a year. Prices include landing fees at Cambridge airport.

For information, call Cambridge Flying Group reservations on 01763-229 004 or the clubhouse on 01223-293 343. Other organisations providing flights in Tiger Moths include Avia Special Ltd, based near Hatfield, on 01707-262 774. Gift vouchers for flights in Tiger Moths can also be obtained from the Activity Superstore tel: 01799-526 526.

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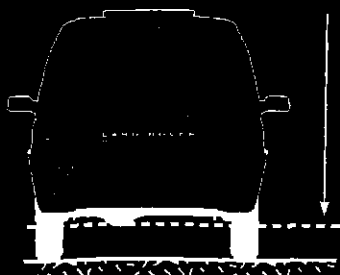
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The reason we have lower insurance rates than our European counterparts is that we hate bureaucracy so much we stupidly avoid claiming

Britain loses its no-claims bonus

The scene is a fairly quiet, narrow road. Mine is one of three cars in procession. The car in the lead stops and starts reversing, the driver having overshot an entrance on the right. The car in front of mine, trying to avoid being hit by the first car, also starts to reverse. I do not reverse, having seen a car behind me. The car in front hits my car. A small matter, nobody hurt.

Question: Are there enough hours in the average busy day to justify spending at least two of them explaining this, with diagrams, to an insurance company?

Answer: No. I could not, after the event, estimate even the approximate width of the road, nor could I say how fast the other car was travelling: how about 2mph? The diagram, that device so beloved of insurance companies, could only have shown two blobs touching

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

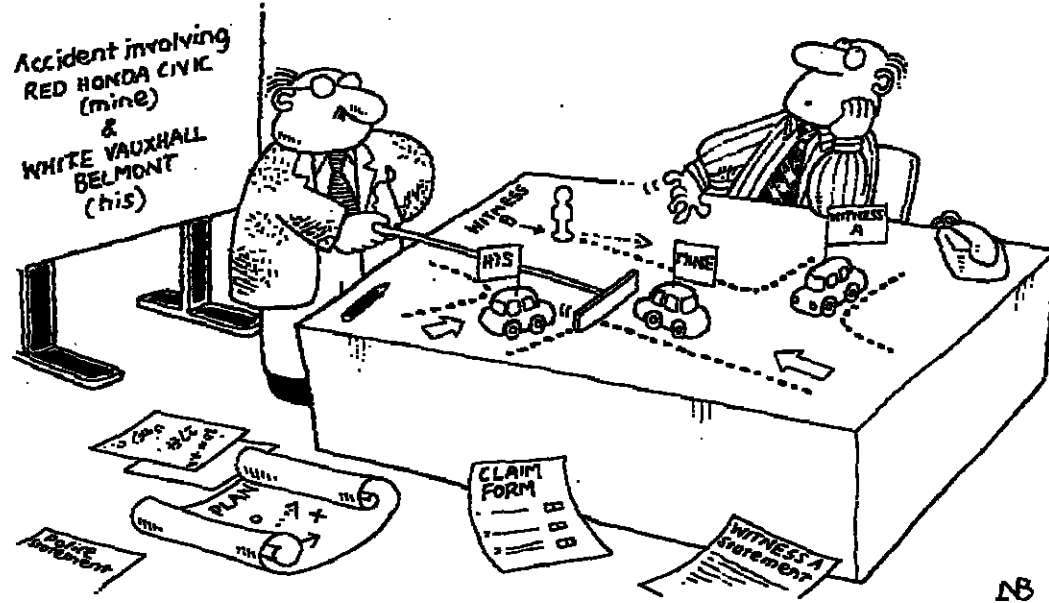
each other, thus enlightening the insurers not one jot.

I submit all of the above as being in large part responsible for the conclusion reflected by a headline in *The Times* this week: "Safe British drivers pay less insurance." A survey of European insurance companies has shown that the French

file twice as many insurance claims as the British, while the Spanish file three times as many. The average insurance premium in Britain is £231, whereas in France it is £290. The Swiss, would you believe it, pay £537. This shows that foreigners are terrible drivers, while we are safe. It may even suggest that foreigners are always filing bogus insurance claims, whereas we do not.

I think we need to be careful here. There are plenty of statistics that show that British roads are safer, measured in terms of accident deaths and injuries, than roads in the rest of Europe. But this is not remotely the same as saying that we have fewer accidents. I think the reason is that we have a less bureaucratic mindset.

One thing that shows the difference between Britain and France is that Britain has an innate demo-



cratic tendency, while France has an innate administrative tendency. All people complain about form-filling, but the French do not complain nearly as much we do.

In France "bureaucracy" is not a term of abuse. French bureaucrats, particularly at local level, are respected members of the community. Here, at parties, bureaucrats tend to pretend they do some

more respectable job, like being a traffic warden.

And there are so many variables built into calculating car insurance premiums that international comparisons, although interesting, do not paint the whole picture.

So we are left with the only real guide to the extent of car-smashing in Britain, which is how much money we hand over to panel beat-

ers and paint sprayers. No statistics are collected, but I would bet that a substantial proportion of people involved in accidents do as I did in the case related above: take the other person's details, walk away and forget about it.

Forget about it, that is, until the front bumper, which showed only a few hairline cracks immediately after the accident, went through a

carwash some weeks later and came out looking as if it had picked up a particularly virulent rash. I visited a couple of garages. A new cover for the bumper? "That'll be £128 plus VAT, sir." A repair job? "Call it sixty quid, guv." At which point you wonder whether the insurance company would have been a better option. Of course, there is always the risk of losing a no-claims bonus. In some cases that even applies if the other party admits liability.

The calculation as to whether an insurance claim is worth the bother would be made a lot easier if damage repair estimates were honest. The question, "How much will this cost to repair?" has two answers, depending on whether the car owner or the insurance company is paying. Nor should drivers be smug about this, because the garage owners I know say they lose business if they refuse to take part in double-estimating.

Now this is madness. A garage inflates the cost of a repair, the insurance company pays out more than it should, the company's customers find their premiums raised, so that the next time they have an accident they don't claim because the vicious circle will start all over again. Not much to be smug about there.

Now Bavaria brings you better driving skills

Bill Thomas discovers on BMW's new roadcraft course that he is not the perfect motorist after all

At the core of motor journalism stand two principles that can never be disputed. The first is that all motor journalists are good drivers. The second is that no one can teach a motor journalist anything about driving.

How fascinating it was, therefore, to attend the press launch of BMW's new Driving Dynamics training course at Brands Hatch and see both of these ideals shattered.

It is a common failing to think you are quite a good driver, but in the grand scheme of things you probably are not.

More than 90 per cent of all traffic accidents are caused by human error. An average of 14 people are killed each day on British roads, and 30 are injured every hour — at a cost to the taxpayer of about £2.5 billion a year, or £288,000 an hour. Despite what we might think about our own ability, something is going wrong.

With that in mind, the Bavarian carmaker has joined with the Brands Hatch race-track organisation to offer drivers a chance to improve their car control and roadcraft.

Driving Dynamics is a one-day course that teaches braking, steering and handling techniques on a controlled racetrack environment, along with an on-road driving session to improve observation, awareness and attitude.

After a detailed briefing, we were assigned to our fleet of BMW 323 saloons and sent to a large area of Tarmac to learn about car dynamics.

Few drivers have the opportunity to cope with emergencies until they are facing an accident. Here, instructors demonstrated ABS braking, emergency lane changes, and various types of skid, before talking us through each discipline using two-way radios.

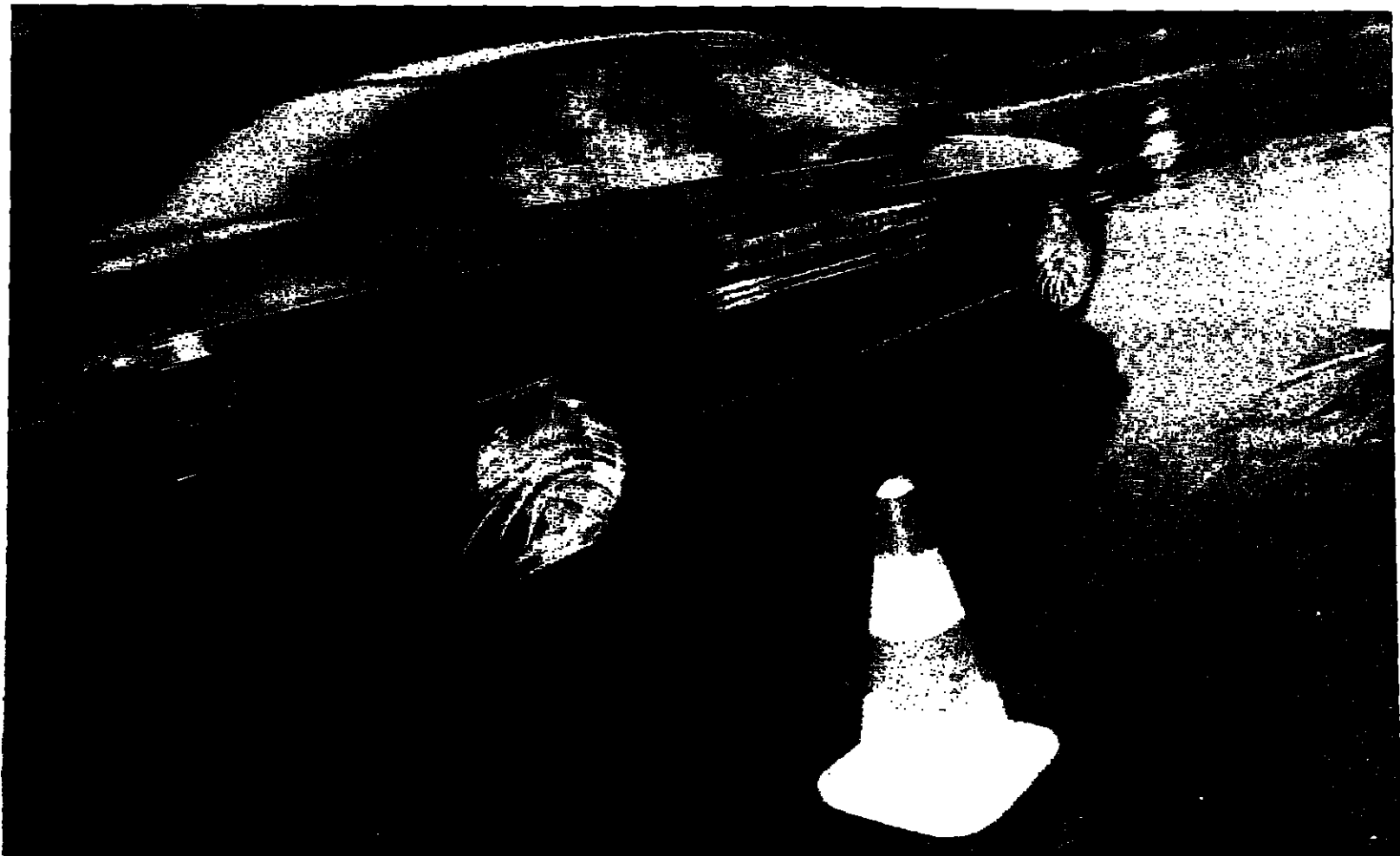
Cones flew skyward, tyres howled and the unfortunate

BMW's rocked from side to side as the members of Her Majesty's Press flung them about. The idea was to learn how to feel the balance of the car on its suspension, try to understand the forces acting on it and predict its behaviour at the limit of the tyres' adhesion.

This was not easy, because one's natural reaction is often completely incorrect. For example, more steering lock does not always mean tighter turning. You will get more grip if you apply less lock when the front wheels are skidding because the tyres will have a larger contact patch with the road.

Anti-lock brakes were revealed as a supreme safety aid as we hurried the cars around a stationary obstacle on a streaming wet surface, while applying full braking force. With the ABS switched off, the car ploughed straight on, unsteerable.

The instructors were fluent,



Cones flew, tyres howled and unfortunate BMWs rocked from side to side as the journalists tried out the new course, run at the Brands Hatch circuit

patient and helpful. As they pointed out the car's exact behaviour in layman's terms and told us where we were going wrong, we tried again and again to get it right. All the "perfect" drivers present improved in some way.

In the afternoon we embarked on a trip around East London. The main focus was on attitude and observation. The Driving Dynamics instructors encouraged us to develop a calm state of mind as they gave tips about hazard

perception, planning, positioning and road markings. Most drivers on British roads won't have undergone any form of training since taking the licence test, so bad habits developed in that time may not be checked. They soon

were in this session, but the idea was not to enforce rigid discipline, rather to suggest techniques to improve safety. Learning just how much you do not know about driving is a revelation. At £346 for a day, Driving Dynamics is

aimed squarely at the corporate and fleet market. But, after witnessing the improvement among even the most experienced motoring journalists, one could not help thinking that everyone should complete the course.

V6 Laguna: Renault's wolf in grey saloon's clothing

Vaughan Freeman gets fierce with the plain-Jane motor that its maker says is the fastest thing you can buy for less than £20,000

Some tens of thousands of British motorists in France each summer spend much of their *autoroute* time watching *stunningly* fast French cars swoop past them.

For UK drivers baffled by how their French counterparts can go so fast, the mystery has been resolved with the arrival of Renault's all-new 3-litre V6 Laguna RTI.

Traditionally, 3-litre saloons have matched their powerful engines to automatic gearboxes, aiming the cars at lazy private motorists who cannot be bothered to change gear manually, and at company car drivers expecting to do a lot of town and traffic driving.

The Laguna RTI's five-speed manual box shows that Renault has a different driver in

mind for the Laguna, a driver who enjoys, rather than endures, being at the wheel, and who will revel in a 194bhp car that can reach 146mph with a 0-60mph time of 7.5 seconds.

Renault claims it is the fastest car on sale for under £20,000, coupés and sports cars included.

The RTI V6 might look like a saloon, have four doors and a boot, but its similarity ends there. The engine is a phenomenon. At idle it is "have I turned it on?" quiet. In first gear it revs wildly to 7,000rpm and in an instant the car has hit the rev limiter. In second

gear the car leaps forward, responding instantly to the throttle, and in third gear there is no let-up. The irrepressible acceleration enables the driver to commit to any overtaking manoeuvre with total confidence. Long-distance motorway cruising is a breeze.

In this politically correct age, it is almost heretical to flaunt a car as being fast and fun to drive, rather than banging on about its miserly consumption. In this respect perhaps, the RTI is not of its time.

Motorists tempted by all this power might, however, consider the negative side of

V6 ownership — fuel figures of around 25mpg overall and 17mpg in town.

The car poses a serious threat to any driver not keeping a careful eye on the speedo, yet its looks do nothing to betray its performance. There are no tea-tray wings, spoilers or go-fast stripes, just the option of 16in Supertourismo alloy wheels, as seen on Renault's British Touring Car Championship Lagunas.

Words such as wolf and sheep's clothing spring to mind, but the V6 is not race-bred. The power steering is uncannily light, and a steady

hand is needed to stop the car weaving across the road. The brakes are fierce; they are either off or, with the merest dab, full on. The gearbox, too, seems a strangely vague and stodgy affair given that Renault has put it in what it boasts is the fastest-ever road-going Laguna.

The interior is fine if you like grey. There are eight or nine shades of grey, from floor to roof, dashboard to doors, and the windscreen irritatingly reflects a perfect image of the dash.

Renault has clearly spent its money on the engine rather than the interior, but it is perfectly comfortable, even for taller drivers, though the seats run out of support around the shoulders.

Clearly Renault hopes it will be the engine that sells the car: it claims that the V6 Laguna was developed in response to customer demand. To reflect this, Renault expects 70 per cent of RTI sales to be with the manual gearbox — usually around three-quarters of 3-litre cars sold are automatics.

The mix of price and performance should be enough to sell the 1,500 or so RTI V6 Lagunas that Renault plans for the UK each year, and it intends to make much of the car's competitive package.

The £18,620 price means the 3-litre V6 RTI is only around £500 more than the four-cylinder 125bhp VW Passat 1.8 Sport, £200 more than the 102bhp BMW 316i SE, but around £1,000 less than Ford's 2.5-litre 170bhp V6.

YOUR CHANCE TO JOIN THE GREAT CLASSIC CAR PARADE

READERS of *The Times* are invited to join one of the year's most popular motoring events, the parade of 500 veteran, vintage and classic vehicles that runs through Shakespeare country, writes Tony Dave.

Entries for the event, on Sunday September 6, have now closed — but 20 places are reserved for readers who can convince the organisers that they have the most rare or intriguing motor cars.

The *Times* Twenty will join a parade representing the complete history of the motor car, from the earliest boneshakers of the late 19th century, through the Thirties classics to the latest sports and glamour models.

The Coventry Run, now in its 14th year, and sponsored by the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, always attracts huge crowds along a 66-mile route from Coombe Country Park near Coventry, through the city and on to Kenilworth, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick.

This is the third year that places have been reserved for *Times* readers; the cars they have run have included a vintage Rolls-Royce and Bentley, a 1928 Buick Master Six, and 1948 Studebaker Coupé and a rare Piper P2.

"This year we would like to attract readers who run vintage cars, or anything dating from the 1890s to 1939, as we have been inundated by entries from people who own more recent classics," says Martin Hone, director of International Festival Services, organisers of the event.

"We hope to broaden the event into a motoring spectacular, and these older cars will contrast splendidly with a collection of Mini Coopers and a group of MGs that will be taking part," he adds.



John and Fiona West paraded their Daimler last year

Members of *The Times* Twenty in previous years have entered into the spirit of the event by dressing up in clothes of the same period as their car. John and Fiona West of Stamford, Lincolnshire, who took their 1934 LQ 2/20 Daimler on last year's run, turned out in smart 1930s attire. "It was splendid to have the opportunity to take part," says John. "It was a wonderful event and formed part of our silver wedding celebrations."

Martin Steibelt of Speldhurst, Kent, who entered a beautifully restored 1956

Ford Popular, says: "We had not imagined the size of the crowds along the roads or the welcome they gave us. It made the slow and uncomfortable 300-mile round trip and the effort of keeping the Pop on the road for the past 15 years well worthwhile."

♦ To enter, send a short letter explaining why your vehicle deserves a place on the IMechE Coventry Run, plus a colour photograph of it, to: *Times Twenty*, PO Box 200, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 7TR. Entries close on August 5.



Laguna may have a dull interior, four doors and a boot, but there ends the similarity with other saloons. This one is fast

46 UNIT TRUST PRICES

Main table containing unit trust prices, organized by fund name, share price, and percentage change. Includes various fund categories like Equity, Bond, and Money Market.

Advertisement for Lehmann Communications EC3, featuring the company logo and contact information: 'For the right Communications Strategy Call 0171 266 3020'.

Large vertical text on the right edge of the page, partially cut off, reading 'Crash have...'.

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom center of the page, possibly a signature or note.



£23m ASDA CARROT 48

Supermarket staff in line to receive share windfalls

WEEKEND MONEY

NATIONWIDE CALL 56

Final countdown to crucial vote for building society



Crash course in safe havens for investors

Guaranteed is a word used to describe many types of stock market investment with widely varying degrees of risk.

Recognising that investors are becoming increasingly confused by the diverse range of offers now on sale, the Treasury has placed guaranteed stock market bonds under close scrutiny.

With nervousness about the level of the UK market, many investors will see guaranteed schemes as a safe haven. But comfort comes at a cost.

Peace of mind offered by guaranteed schemes comes at a price, says Patrick Collinson

"They worked well until the last quarter of last year. Far Eastern markets had fallen out of bed and we moved lots of money into them.

"We are finding that when markets suddenly move, these funds are left way behind. It looks like there is no such thing as a free lunch in investment."

ALB Govett admits that the funds have suffered a poor first quarter of 1998, but added that over the long term they will meet the expectations of investors.

Fund managers are banking on a stock market crash to prove the worth of protected unit trusts.

He said: "In 1987, if investors had our sort of fund, they would have got 19 per cent growth on the year despite the crash. The stock market jumped over the first three quarters of 1987 then collapsed in the fourth.

Some investment advisers say that there is little point in putting money into protected or guaranteed trusts and bonds if an individual has a long-term investment horizon.

"You don't go into equities for three months or six months, you go in for the long haul, and if

you are in the for the long haul, this sort of protection may not be worth it."

Protected unit trusts make up only a small part of the wide array of new products that give some of the extra returns from investing in shares while avoiding the disaster of a market crash.

Guaranteed stock market bonds. These promise to return between 95 per cent and 100 per cent of the original capital, plus a fixed percentage of a particular index.

Guaranteed equity bonds. These work in a similar way to the guaranteed stock market bonds but have more limited exposure to the stock market.

Insurance-guaranteed unit trusts. The simplest form of guarantee, where a unit trust investor pays an extra premium to buy an insurance contract which protects the fund from falls.

Protected unit trusts. Capital protection of 95-98 per cent, plus share of rise in stock market index. The protected unit trusts offer the most immediate access to cash without early exit charges and can be bought as savings plans for as little as £25 a month.



Bond to the rescue as market tumbled in Japan

Two years ago stock market professionals were promoting Japan as the best bet for investors, with the Tokyo market at a seven-year low.

Not so Colin Smith, of Poole, Dorset. He bought into the Tokyo market in October 1996, but decided to protect his investment by buying a guaranteed bond from AIG Life.

Mr Smith said: "I had a few pounds spare from a maturing endowment policy, and when I looked around to invest it I thought the US, UK and Europe all seemed to be pretty much at all-time highs. Japan looked better value, despite what has happened since. I've been delighted with it because I have made a profit even when everybody else seems to have lost money."

Mr Smith, a semi-retired financial adviser, and his wife, who runs a catering business, keep about 50 per cent of their investment money in protected or guaranteed products.

Green fingers: Colin and Tessa Smith's money grew by 4.5 per cent

PATRICK COLLINSON

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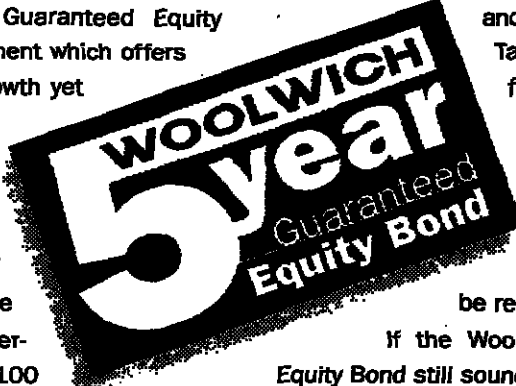
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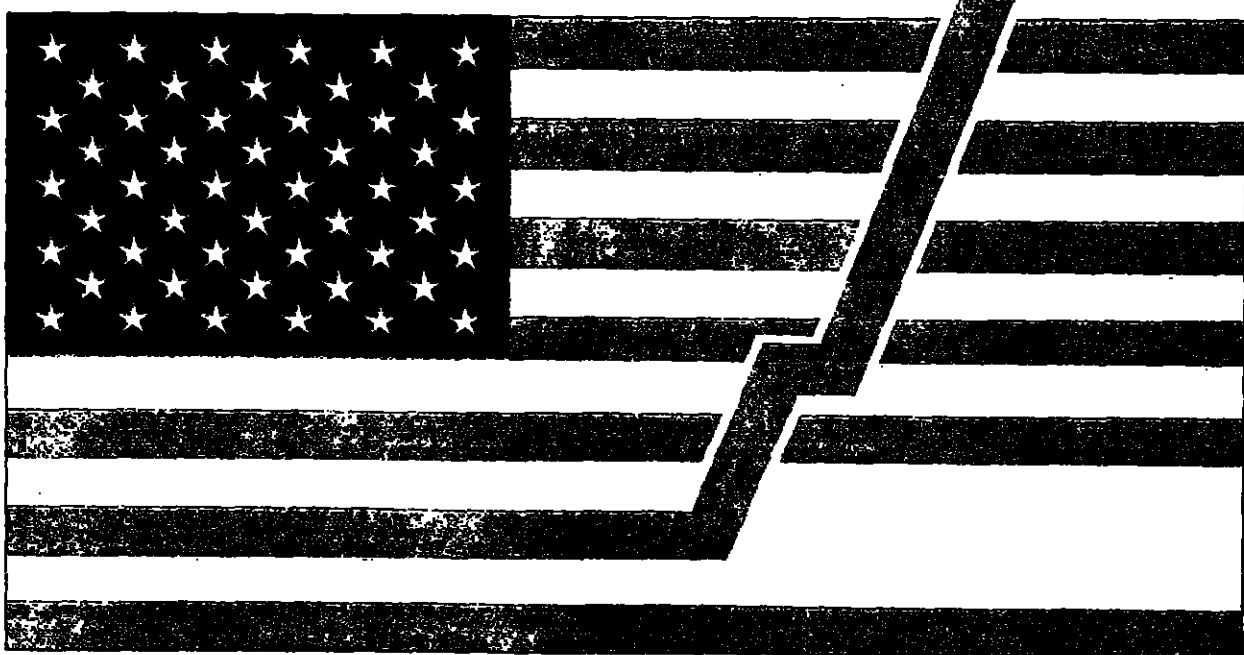


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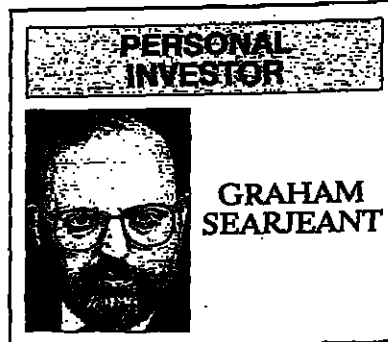
Small is plain and jilted

Back in January, Hoare Govett gently broke off its ten-year affair with small companies. The small companies effect showed that, as a whole, they always tend to give higher returns to investors than big ones. No more. In future, the broker concluded, "the investment decision should be guided by fundamentals" which matter much more than market sentiment.

From 1985 to 1987, returns from small quoted companies beat the FTSE All-share average by about 6 per cent a year. Investors would consistently have fared about one third better by backing a range of small stocks. This revelation, based on exhaustive studies by Professors Elroy Dimson and Paul Marsh of the London Business School, spawned several specialist trusts.

In the past decade, however, as it to prove Murphy's Law, returns from big companies have outpaced those from small ones by a similar margin. Over a full 40 years, the small fry still ran faster, but the profitable market anomaly turned out to be a phase. Since January, the new small-is-ugly phase has continued. Significantly, perhaps, small company indices have been heavily tilted by the exchange rate. They lagged as sterling climbed, shone briefly in May, when sterling fell sharply, then relapsed after the June rise in base rates.

Messrs Dimson and Marsh have since been working their conclusions up in a paper soon due for publication. It underlines the importance of dividends in the total returns from investing in shares. In the earlier period, smaller companies started with a higher dividend yield and their dividends then rose faster than the market average. By the time they found favour, they had already been re-rated. Yields were lower than average. Dividends then grew slower than big company payouts.



The main reason is that they were in the wrong sectors. Far more are in building and property, which did not exactly have a happy time during the latest recession. And there are far more general manufacturers in the lower reaches of the stock market, hit by the

strength of sterling. Much of the impact of the 1980-81 recession, by comparison, fell on big old industries. In the 1990s, the return on the Hoare Govett Smaller Companies Index only beat the all-share by much in 1993, just after we left the exchange-rate mechanism, devalued sterling and slashed interest rates. But the stars since then have been banks, oil, pharmaceuticals and electrical utilities, few of which are invited to the small companies ball.

The professors rightly offer no predictions. But we can draw some conclusions. Small companies, as a whole, should deliver higher returns to compensate for the higher perceived risk in individual shares. Thankfully, they are now again rated lower than FTSE 100 stocks, though not by much. A net dividend yield of 2.7 per cent compares with 2.3 per cent on the Footsie. Trusts spread the risk but cannot counter smaller companies' greater dependence on interest and exchange rates and the health of home industry. In America, however, the Nasdaq smaller companies market has been transformed by the rush of issues in fashionable new software and research-based industries. That trend will accelerate here. Meanwhile, titans are still worth following, but offer no easy money.

Asda's £23m carrot

Karen Woolfson reports on an options scheme which rewards the shopfloor



Some 26,000 employees at Asda, the supermarket chain, are poised to share in a £23 million windfall. The store's Colleague Share Ownership plan, which was introduced three years ago in an attempt to motivate the workforce and break down its hierarchy, makes its first distribution of free shares on July 24. The share option price will be fixed on Monday. Unlike the majority of option schemes which benefit the fat cats and exclude the shop-floor, the Asda plan bars senior executives from taking part, recognising that the company's performance depends on its stores and the people working in them. One of the beneficiaries will be Elaine Collins, who works at the group's store in Rochampton Vale in West London. Mrs Collins received 3,200 share options at a fixed price of 96p each in 1995, half of which will be exercised on July 24 when she expects to receive a payout of about £1,800. She can take this in shares which can be sold for cash. Under the terms of the scheme, the difference between the option price and the current share price is distributed either in the form of shares or cash. With Asda's share price at about 210p, this means that 114p will be distributed for each option held. The other half of Mrs Collins's options can be exercised after six years in 2001 and as each lot matures employees are granted the right to take up further options equivalent to 12.5 per cent of their salary. Mrs Collins said: "The hot favourite at the moment is to take them in shares. I'm going to take shares because I hope to make more money that way, but it's also a way of saving. We are all here for the same purpose, to make sure

the company does well. The harder we work, the more money the company will make and the more we'll get out of it in shares. But it is not just about money, it is much more than that. I'm being paid back for what I put into my job. It is Asda's way of saying thank you and it makes me feel appreciated.

"The scheme didn't mean a lot to me at first. I knew nothing about shares, but once it was explained to me I wanted to know all about it. Now I can't wait to get home and look at the Teletext to see whether Asda's share price has gone up or down. My husband is amused that I come home and switch on Teletext every night."

Mrs Collins is also part of the Sharesave scheme which Asda introduced with Yorkshire Building Society a year before the Colleague Share Ownership Plan was set up. The scheme allows employees who have worked in the company for at least two years to save between £5 and £250 a month and after three or five years this money can be used to buy Asda shares at a price fixed at the outset of the plan. Mrs Collins started to put £150 of her monthly salary into the plan last year when the share options were fixed at 106p — which was a 20 per cent discount to the market price. She will eventually have the choice of buying the shares or keeping the money with interest accrued.

Her only regret is that she did not join the Sharesave scheme at the start when the fixed price offered to employees was much lower.

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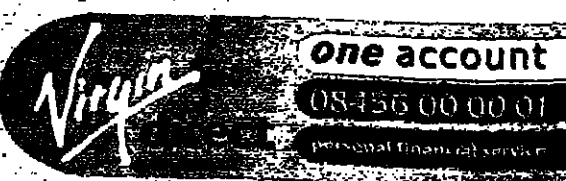
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سكوا من الاصل

Slow decline of financial advisers

The news that walking on hot coals formed part of a motivational course for Eagle Star salesmen suggests that this sector of the financial services industry thinks the road ahead may be fraught with peril. But, as the Eagle Star team nurse their burns and pray that the next test of managerial mettle will be, say, training with the Paras, they can take comfort that they do not face a difficult future alone. Hard times may also be ahead for independent financial advisers, who appear to have few friends in Government.

When Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary, last week roasted IFA firms for their tardiness in the pension review, she questioned the "viability" of the industry's structure. This was not, it seems, an empty threat. Many in the Treasury believe



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

that IFAs paid by commission are no better than salesmen. Observers say that the Treasury would happier to see the well-off hire fee-based advisers, while everyone else arranges their affairs over the telephone, cutting out the middleman, whether IFA or salesperson. The future of financial services may be the girl in a call centre, not the man in the Mondeo. This hardening of hearts at the

Treasury comes as Morgan Stanley launches a range of American-style no-load funds. In English this means a fund with no initial charge, a deduction designed to pay the intermediary's commission. The launch may coincide with concerns about the markets, but in every other way, the timing is propitious. Morgan Stanley is aiming at well-informed investors. In America, financial knowhow is

seen as essential equipment for adult life. Women's magazines carry features on mutual funds, alongside the lipstick hints. The necessity to provide for old age will force the British to become just as "savvy", as *Glamour* would put it.

If other fund managers see Morgan Stanley succeed, they will also launch their own no-load actively managed funds. What then for the IFAs, the fund managers' principal source of business? The story may be not so much the death of a salesman, as the slow decline of the IFA. At last there are some decent deals for small savers. Standard Life is offering 7.35 per cent on deposits of just £1. This makes some amends for its grating TV advertisement where the baby discusses Standard Life's merits with his dumbstruck papa.

Karen Woolfson on why thousands of investors will get shirty over their Peps



In the rush to buy a Pep while they are still available, it is predicted that thousands of people will invest in an unsuitable scheme, either too risky or insufficiently adventurous. You should choose a plan that suits you and your circumstances.

Charles Levent-Scrivener, director at the financial adviser Towry Law, risk-profiles Peps and then risk-profiles his clients before recommending a plan. He then considers a client's personal objectives, takes a view on the investment climate and only then brings together all the elements in order to give advice. He divides Peps into five categories:

■ Speculative. These include single-company schemes where you buy shares in a single company, such as the Perpetual Managed Plan.

■ Adventurous. Among these are plans with both a currency and an equity risk, such as Garmore Selected European Opportunities.

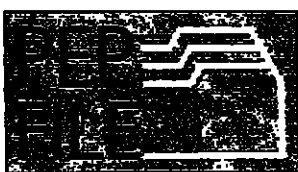
■ Market risk. These are plans sensitive to market fluctuations. Primarily they are index-tracking plans and blue chip plans such as Credit Suisse Growth Portfolio, Garmore British Growth and Mercury Blue Chip, in addition to funds with 50 per cent of their holdings in the UK and the rest overseas.

Size up the various funds available to make sure you have a perfect fit

■ Balanced. These include plans that have holdings split equally between UK equities and fixed-interest investments, such as the Save & Prosper Extra Income Fund and Clerical Medical Retirement Income Trust.

■ Cautious. Peps such as the HSBC Triple Allowance and Scottish Widows Safety Plus. The HSBC plan is useful for people who have used up their £6,000 general Pep allowance and are hesitant about using up their £3,000 single-company Pep allowance because it is a more risky investment. The HSBC scheme is based in Dublin and, as a result of a loophole in the rules, allows the £3,000 to be put into a diversified investment and your initial capital is protected regardless of

stock market movements. The Scottish Widows Pep has a safety net at 95 per cent of the bid price of the unit, which is set every 12 months. Weekend Money asked Mr Levent-Scrivener what strategy he would recommend to someone looking to make a 15 to 20-year investment. "I would recommend the Credit Suisse Growth Portfolio Pep, managed by Bill Mott and Suzie Kemp, and a UK blue chip fund with holdings in some other markets," he said. If you invested £1,000 in



Credit Suisse Growth 12 months ago it would now be worth £1,210, up 21 per cent. The same amount held in this Pep over three years would now be worth £1,629, up almost 70 per cent. Over five years it would be valued at £2,057.

More than 36 per cent of Credit Suisse Growth's holdings are currently in services and 19.5 per cent in general industrials such as Siebe, the engineering group.

The fund has an 18.3 per cent exposure to financial stocks such as Lloyds TSB, Alliance & Leicester, Bank of Scotland, Barclays and Royal Sun Alliance. It has 15 per cent in consumer stocks, with a big 4.5 per cent stake in Glaxo Wellcome, and 4 per cent in SmithKline Beecham. The portfolio also has signif-

icant holdings in Shell, BP, British Gas and British Energy.

Ms Kemp and Mr Mott are "playing a defensive game", with the focus currently on stocks with domestic earnings.

They are committed to the UK market and do not believe it is overvalued, though they do not see a great upturn this year because of economic turmoil in the Far East triggering global weakness in the markets.

Mr Mott's current investment strategy is based on his views for the direction of sterling. He says: "The industrial sector is almost in recession and the service sector is growing too fast."

"I think sterling will fall over the next two years, and that will favour the industrials, but we're not there yet. So our short-term strategy is to remain overweight in support services like software and mobile phone companies and longer term to increase our exposure to industrials."

Ms Kemp adds: "One of the biggest bets we've got is on Vodafone, which is 3.5 per cent of the portfolio. We started buying at around 230p a couple of years ago and the price was at 840p on July 1. Mobile phones are a big growth area and we spotted that trend."

She also emphasises the exposure to software groups that are growing as a result of the millennium bug issue.

هكذا من الأصل



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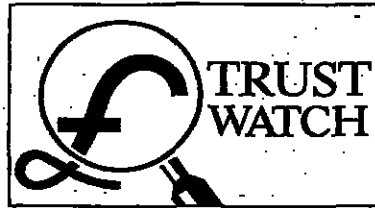
Gavin Lumsden clears confusion over the relatively unexplored territory of investment trusts, while



Take a closer look at investment trusts: they can give better returns than unit trusts

Claim a piece of the action enjoyed by the professionals

You don't have to be a trainpotter to invest in investment trusts but it can help to make your way through one of the most arcane sectors of the financial services industry.



Investment trust companies, as they are properly called, are the original savings schemes set up in the 1860s to finance the construction of railways in North and South America. However, despite their pedigree and a long-established reputation for offering good performance and low charges, they remain largely unexplored territory for ordinary investors.

It is not hard to see why. Investment trusts are restricted from marketing themselves in the way that unit trusts, their younger and more successful rivals, can. As a result, selecting one of the 300-plus investments can appear hopelessly confusing given that they are spread over 21 different sectors and many have quaint or uninformative names such as Aurora, Candover, Mithras, Scottish Mortgage or Witan.

Neither does it help that more than half of the £64 billion held in investment trusts is put there by professional investors. This has contributed to a justifiable perception that the industry is a private club for the well-heeled.

Although they are a slightly higher risk, investment trusts are remarkably similar to their more popular unit trust brethren and long term can produce better returns.

Both unit and investment trusts invest in the stocks and shares of other companies in the UK and abroad, and therefore are efficient ways of investing in the stock market. A stake in either a unit or investment trust means you hold a tiny stake in every company the trusts hold. This "basket" approach reduces the risk of anything going

link between the value of the assets it holds and the trust's share prices. Investment trust share prices are determined by supply and demand and frequently rise above, or fall below, the trust's net asset value.

For example, a trust may excite attention for growing its assets per share from 90p to 100p. As demand for the trust increases, its shares may outstrip this growth and rise from 90p to 110p. The shares are now standing at what is known as a premium of 10 per cent to net asset value. In other words, new investors are paying 10 per cent more than they should purely for the trust's investment record. Bad news for them, but good news for existing shareholders who are getting more than they deserve.

Unfortunately, this scenario is a rare event. Far more common are discounts where a trust's assets per share grow from 90p to 100p but its shares struggle to make 92p. In this case the shares are standing at an 8 per cent discount. Good news if you are a new investor buying 100p worth of assets for just 92p, but bad news if you are holding the shares.

Discounts are the blight of investment trusts, the symptom and the cause of their unpopularity. From 1993 to the end of 1997 discounts on the average investment trust widened from a tolerable 3 per cent to a miserable 15 per cent.

One factor was that too many shares were on offer, caused a rash of new launches in 1993. This was exacerbated by the long-term trend of institutional investors to sell their holding in investment trusts. In addition, investment trusts, which invest heavily overseas, were affected by the strength

of sterling which sapped their returns and made them look even worse compared with the booming UK stock market.

Recently, confidence has returned as it has become clear that the industry is about to become leaner and meaner. Shareholder rebellions have forced several large trusts to call it a day and hand back £1 billion of money. In addition, numerous other trusts have indicated that they will start buying back their shares soon.

A reduced supply of shares has started narrowing discounts already. This has led some experts to urge investors to buy investment trust shares. Certainly there is no better time to buy a good trust than when its share's discount is narrowing. Investors then get a double boost from asset growth and share price performance.

However, ordinary investors are better advised to ignore discounts altogether, particularly if they are planning to invest for a long time. Although the effect of discounts can appear catastrophic in the short term, over ten years they become almost irrelevant.

Certainly, investment trusts have given unit trusts a run for their money since 1988. Shares in the average UK capital growth investment trust, for example, have turned a £100 investment into more than £417, compared with the equivalent average unit trust which has returned £336. International capital growth investors have fared much better with £470 compared with the £349 from the equivalent unit trust.

However, investment trusts have done far worse than unit trusts in the riskier sectors of UK smaller companies, the Far East and emerging markets.

Pick and mix a jargon-free pension

Investment trusts are white knights waiting to help savers who have been frightened to buy a pension after the mis-selling antics of the industry. Although investment trust shares have struggled to beat unit trusts in recent years, they have trounced the returns made by insurers running traditional pensions.

For example, over the past ten years the average investment trust investing in the UK and overseas has turned £1,000 into more than £4,000 compared with the average insurance managed fund which has produced less than

£2,500 (Source: Standard & Poor's Micropal).

As well as providing better returns, investment trust pensions are easier to understand than conventional plans. The seven existing investment trust pensions dispense with confusing jargon and hidden charges for which insurance companies are notorious.

Contributions can be started from as little as £50 per month, although Alliance, one of the most interesting plans, only accepts lump sums above £250. The money is used to buy shares in investment trusts run by the fund manager. Flemings and Foreign &

Colonial, two giants in the industry, have the biggest stable of trusts although Alliance, Edinburgh Fund Managers and Ivory & Sims also allow you to link to trusts run by rival managers.

The ability to pick and mix the trusts means investors have to do some work on their own to get the most out of the plans. However, some plans include options where the manager will select trusts on your behalf, changing the mix the nearer you reach retirement. Investment trusts are inherently more risky than other forms of investment - this is why their returns are

better. If you are a cautious investor Edinburgh Fund Managers includes a special option to reduce risk.

Generally, investment trust pensions are cheap to run, although there are various charges to consider. Most will levy a small fee to set up the plan and each time you make a contribution. They will then take annual management fees of around 0.5 per cent to 1 per cent plus around 0.7 per cent for the trusts you have selected. Some charge a 0.2 per cent broking fee every time new shares are bought. Others charge £5 each time you switch a fund. One of the

cheapest is Flemings, which charges no set-up or initial fees and caps its annual management charge at £175.

Ironically, all the plans have linked up with insurance companies to provide the bells and whistles of traditional pensions. Life insurance and waiver of premium, which pays contributions if you are unable to work, are standard.

Kim North, of the Pretty Technical Partnership, said: "You should always look under the bonnet of any pension contract. When the correct investment trust is selected it can be wonderful for pension provision."

INVESTMENT TRUST FACTFILE

YOU can become an investment trust shareholder from as little as £25 per month by setting up a savings scheme. Most companies offer them and details are available from the Association of Investment Trust Companies on 0171-431 5252.

You can achieve impressive results, even with small monthly contributions, by reinvesting the dividends you get from the shares. If you had started a £25 savings scheme 20 years ago you would today be sitting on more than £40,000.

Holding the shares for a long time gets over the perennial problem of investment trusts: discounts. This is where the price of investment trust shares does not reflect the full value of the assets they hold. This is caused by lack of demand for the shares. Analysts divide investment trusts into 13 broad sectors depending on what they

specialise in. Historically, large general international trusts such as Alliance, Foreign & Colonial, Scottish Mortgage and Witan have been the most popular with private investors.

Shares in any one of these highly diversified trusts is arguably all an investor needs. However, they have fallen out of favour with institutional investors. Several have been attacked by aggressive "vulture" funds after their share price suffered. One of these, Baring Tribune, a £300 million trust, was expected to publish reconstruction proposals this week.

For information on investment trust pension plans, contact: Alliance Trust Companies 01382-201 900; Edinburgh Fund Managers 0800-838 993; Foreign & Colonial 0171-454 1415; AIB Govett 0800-252 338; Ivory & Sims 0131-225 1357.

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Helen Pridham slices through the tangle of wares on offer



Take your pick: sometimes it can be as difficult to select the right investment trust as it was to single out the guilty person in *The Usual Suspects*

One of the trickiest aspects of any investment product is picking the one that will provide the best results. In the case of investment trusts, there are more than 300 from middle-of-the-road international trusts to highly specialised venture capital trusts.

Peter Hargreaves, of the Bristol investment advisers and stockbrokers Hargreaves Lansdown, says: "Although there are fewer investment trusts than unit trusts, there is probably more choice. There are trusts investing in different geographical locations or providing growth and income, there are different classes of investment trust shares, trusts that have different levels of gearing (borrowing) ... and so on."

This means there are a variety of factors to take into account: your investment objective, the area of the world you want to invest in and the level of risk you can take.

The first purchase that many investment advisers would recommend for an investor seeking capital growth is a core holding in a large international trust. "These give exposure to virtually all

Host of options to keep you guessing

the world's stock markets," says David Nichols, of the Leeds advisers Nichols Williams Durrant & Co. Two trusts that he likes are Witan and Anglo & Overseas, managed by Henderson and Morgan Grenfell.

Christopher Taylor Young, of Taylor Young Investment Management in London, agrees. "You won't go far wrong if you opt for size and quality," he says. "This is why I believe Foreign & Colonial is still a good bet even though it has been no one's favourite recently."

For investors seeking income he recommends solid conventional trusts such as Merchants and Temple Bar. Although none of these trusts would be described as high-risk, they have modest accounts of borrowings. Simon Davies, associate director of the private client portfolio

managers, Berry Asset Management in London, says: "Investors who are concerned about risk should look carefully at things such as gearing and warrants — normally the fewer bells and whistles a trust has, the lower the risk."

Where a trust has warrants attached, the extra shares that are issued can dilute the value of existing shareholders' investments.

An investor with specific investment needs could consider the shares of split capital trusts. Depending on the shares chosen, they can provide either an above-average income or the potential for enhanced capital growth. But they are relatively high-risk and should not normally be purchased without expert advice. Indeed, at this stage of the market cycle, many advisers do not regard them as particularly attractive. One exception,

company warrants. Tom Tuttle-Dalton, investment trust analyst at Credit Lyonnais Securities, says that investors who believe technology is likely to be an interesting area in the next two years could consider Henderson Global Technology.

Several advisers caution investors against choosing trusts by the size of their discounts. "Investors are often attracted to investment trusts showing large discounts, hoping to gain extra returns when the discount narrows — but they are not a one-way ticket," says Mr Davies.

Although there are professional investors around building up stakes in such trusts in order to pressure managers into taking action to reduce discounts, it is not easy to predict when such pressure will bear fruit.

Mr Loudon says: "Large discounts can be the result of poor performance so you risk buying a poor quality investment. If the discount closes from, say, 17 per cent to 2 per cent over a year that is ideal, but if you have to wait any longer the difference in investment performance will offset any gain."

Defectors swamp society

Stroud & Swindon lowered the rates and brought down the shutters on a new account after being inundated by angry customers defecting from the Northern Rock after the bank's savings fiasco this spring (Susan Emmett writes).

The building society, which launched the new 30-day Direct Account at the beginning of April, cut the rates for deposits over £10,000 from 8 per cent to 7.7 per cent only two months after the account was launched. The account was also closed to new investors.

Richard Swan, the finance director, said that about 30,000 savers had expressed an interest in the new account. Many were investors with the Northern Rock who

applied after the Newcastle bank reduced the number of accounts and slashed the rates. Mr Swan said that although the building society's decision had been unpopular with new customers, the demand would have resulted in lower rates to other savers and higher rates to existing borrowers. "We've got to honour the customers we've got first and foremost," he said.

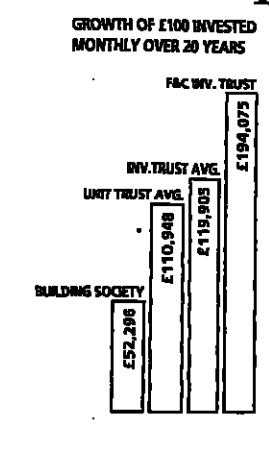
Northern Rock, which will announce its results on Thursday, has so far refused to comment on whether it has lost many customers as a result of the recent debacle.

Savers with the Stroud & Swindon were individually notified before the changes and given the option of transferring their deposits immediately without penalty.

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*Source: (1) S&P Standard & Poor's Microcap, mid-end, from 02/05/94 (annual) date to fund launch to 15/09/98, net income reinvested. Schroder UK Growth Fund plc (2) 02/05/94 to 15/09/98. (3) £11,729.95 (95.00%) vs £1,740.00 (14.83%) of £10k Capital Growth Sector average (10,000 invested) to 15/09/98. (4) 100%.

† Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The value of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invest. You are reminded that the issue of shares is subject to an initial charge and this will have an impact on the realisable value of your investment, particularly in the short term. At any one time, the share price may represent a discount or a premium to the Trust's net asset value. Tax and PEP legislation can change at any time. The Government has announced its plans to introduce a new Individual Savings Account (ISA) in 1999 — although it intends that this will not affect current PEP but will affect the value of trust investments overseas. Investments in newer markets offer the possibility of higher returns but also involve a higher degree of risk, particularly in countries most liable to changes in political, social or religious circumstances. Your investment should be regarded as long term. Please note, for your protection, all calls are recorded and may be monitored by AIB Govett, based by AIB Govett Asset Management Limited, Regulated by FIMRO. A member of the AIB Marketing Group.

www.schroders.com/uk/growth

THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Savings rates on the way up again

Standard Life Bank, a division of the mutual insurer, is raising its rates with effect from Monday...

The Yorkshire Building Society is increasing its savings rates tomorrow, on both branch-based and postal accounts...

The Newcastle Building Society has launched a new account for the under-18s. The Nova 18 will pay 6 per cent...

When holders of the Leeds & Holbeck Building Society's YoungSaver account reach 18, they can pick up a £10 voucher if they graduate to a Tessa...

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes Instant Access Accounts and Notice Accounts & Bonds.

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes First TESSAs (TAX FREE).

Table with columns: Card type, Interest per month, APR%, Fee per annum. Includes Credit Cards.

Table with columns: APR, Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3 yrs with insurance, Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3 yrs no insurance. Includes Personal Loans.

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Larger Lenders.

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Other Loans.

Table with columns: Gross coupon, Buying price, Gross yield, Issue price, Minimum purchase amount. Includes Fixed Rate.

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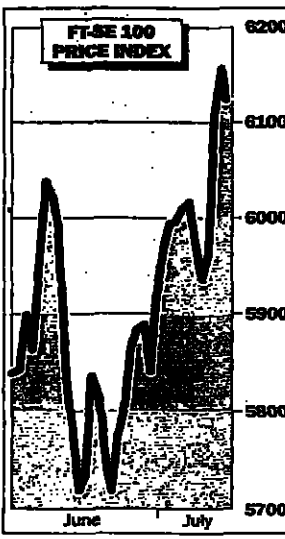
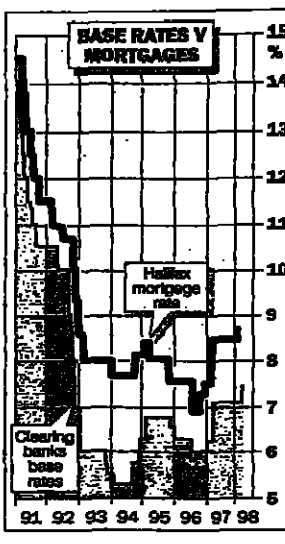


Table with columns: Gross rate, All tax rates, Minimum investment, Notice, Contact. Includes Ordinary A/c, Investment A/c, etc.

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Sun Life, Equitable, etc.

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Sun Life, Equitable, etc.

Advertisement for 7.65% gross p.a. with contact information for Bristol & West.

Table with columns: Investment (£), Company, Standard Rate (%). Includes ANNUAL INCOME Rates as at July 10, 1998.

Source: Chamberlain de Broil 0171-493 7900. Net rates. Income available and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be increased.

Large table listing various insurance and investment products from companies like AEGON LIFE ASSURANCE, ABNEY LIFE, etc.

Large table listing various insurance and investment products from companies like THE UK GRIFF, WORTHINGTON, etc.

Large table listing various insurance and investment products from companies like LONDON & MANCHESTER ASSURANCE, LLOYD'S TSB LIFE, etc.

Large table listing various insurance and investment products from companies like SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS, SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE, etc.

Vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page, partially obscured, mentioning 'DIRECTIONS' and 'PERSONAL LOANS'.

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Misconception over bed-and-breakfasting

From Mr D.S.M. Harris: Sir, Contrary to the current view, bed-and-breakfasting was not a tax loophole but was a sensible concession to allow modest investors to be long-term holders of shares. I doubt if its operation cost the Treasury any significant tax loss, and its abolition will not save anything. My wife and I each have some shareholdings which go back nearly 30 years. Over time they have been added to by rights offers.

scrip dividends and small purchases. They have been bed-and-breakfasted several times.

This is to be no more. Now the certificates have to be surrendered on sale, creating wasteful and possibly unnecessary work for the company's registrar.

The shares have to be sold to realise the capital gain and to use the annual allowances. Because we cannot buy them back immediately, we have to buy something else.

For my part I was so incensed by the blatant attack on my savings that I went out and bought a new car, a top quality new suit and a really expensive holiday.

Therefore, at one stroke the Chancellor has managed to achieve three results that are the exact opposite of his stated intentions — we are no longer long-term shareholders, we are no longer savers and we have given a push to inflation.

Yours faithfully, D. HARRIS, 3 Angled Close, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, HP27 9BA.

Payouts could disappoint the carpetbaggers

From Mr K.A. Yeomans: Sir, Although it is likely that a majority may vote in anticipation of a £2,000 windfall when Nationwide takes steps to convert to plc status it is possible that many will experience disappointment in the result.

The "carpetbaggers" may find that when members are given fuller information the distribution may not be equal for all, as the resolutions listed on the voting form suggest.

Mortgage holders may find that a payoff could well be swallowed up in the future by consequent increased interest on the remaining loan.

Competition from mutual societies has kept in check the instinct of the banks for increased loan rates and reduced savings rates so that they may provide shareholders' dividends and to cover the higher risks associated with their wider loan and other financial activities. It will be unfortunate if this restraint on the needs for the housing market of the general public is lost.

Yours faithfully, K. YEOMANS, 306 Uxbridge Road, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 2YL.

Deals on wheels galore

Clare Stewart examines the finance packages available for car buyers

The August open season for car buying is nearing and while the days of the annual new car scrum may be numbered, this year will see the usual flurry of special finance deals to tempt potential purchasers.

One of the quickest off the blocks with its offers is Yorkshire Bank, which has just added a personal contract purchase option to its range of car finance packages.

When it comes to buying a new car, there are a number of ways of financing the purchase. For private buyers these include hire purchase, using a personal loan or a personal contract purchase. A contract hire agreement may also be offered, though more usually for business customers or for people who are self-employed.

Yorkshire Bank, for example, offers hire purchase terms for amounts of £5,000 and above, and usually requires a deposit of at least 10 per cent.

The advantages of hire purchase are that you can spread a large chunk of the cost of a new car over a longer period and the rate of interest may well be less than that for personal loans.

Yorkshire Bank quotes an example for an APR of 10.9 per cent for a loan taken out over four years on a £10,000 car. But it emphasises that the rate is negotiable and will vary according to customer circumstance, size of deposit and the age and type of car.

Volkswagen, the car manufacturer, says that hire purchase is the most popular choice among customers opting for a VW payment plan. It also asks for a minimum deposit of 10 per cent or part exchange. The average payment period is three years.

A personal loan from a bank or building society is also frequently used for car purchase, both new and second-hand. Always check the small print on loan agreements to make sure that there are no unusual or restrictive clauses, such as a penalty for early repayment.

For a loan of £5,000 over three years, Moneyfacts, the guide to investment and mort-

gage rates, is currently quoting Northern Rock with the lowest rate at 9.9 per cent APR, Yorkshire Bank at 12.5 per cent, Prudential Banking at 12.7 per cent and Direct Line and Royal Bank of Scotland Direct at 12.8 per cent.

Motor manufacturers periodically offer 0 per cent finance deals on new cars, not just in August. Fiat, for example, is offering 0 per cent finance over two years with a 30 per cent deposit on its Punto range, while on Bravo models, the 0 per cent offer is over three years with a 30 per cent deposit. These offers are available until August.

The personal contract purchase (PCP) is increasingly popular as a means of financing car purchases. The PCP is a hybrid of hire purchase and contract hire schemes. It is usually marketed by manufacturers and finance groups under a rather more enticing name. For example, Yorkshire Bank has a PCP scheme called Liberator, Renault has Free-wheels and VW has Solutions.

All of these schemes work on a similar basis, with the buyer paying a deposit and fixed regular payments over a specified period.

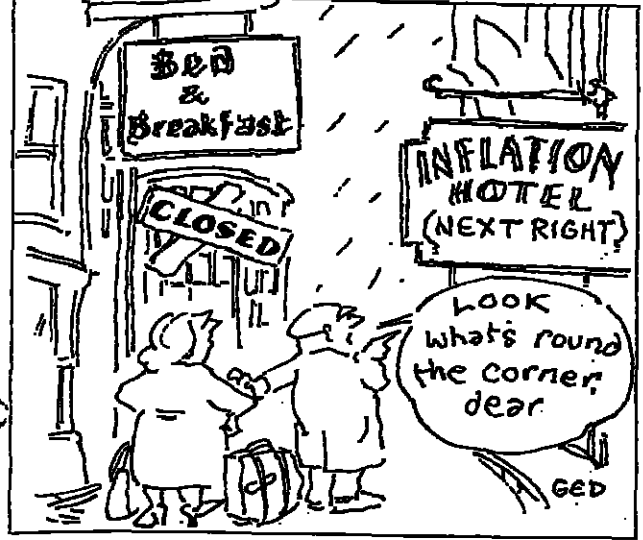
At the end of the period they have the choice of either giving back the car or paying a final amount to purchase the car.

An annual mileage limit is agreed at the start and the payments can also encompass some of the running costs. Under the Yorkshire Bank Liberator scheme, payments for a Renault Megane 1.4 with mileage of 10,000 miles a year would be 48 instalments of £259.84, totalling £12,472.32. Those payments include the cost of servicing, road tax, mechanical repairs, replacement tyres and exhausts.

The buyer has to decide at the beginning of the agreement whether or not they want to buy the vehicle. On the example of the Renault Megane, the final payment would be £3,584.60, making the total purchase cost under the scheme £16,056.92.

Yorkshire Bank: 0800 661100. Moneyfacts: 01603 476466.

Table with 5 columns: Lender, Telephone no., With insurance, No ins, Apr. Rows include Northern Rock, Yorkshire Bank, Prudential Banking, Direct Line, Royal Bank of Scotland Direct.



DIRECT LINE RATES. SAVINGS RATES, MORTGAGE RATE, PERSONAL LOAN RATES. Includes contact numbers and Direct Line logo.

Some of the running costs can be included in monthly payments. Includes text about car finance and a small illustration of a car.

INVESTORS CHRONICLE. Company freebies galore. Includes an illustration of a hand holding a card with various logos.

Gartmore advertisement. 'Look forward to sunny days, look back on a good investment.' Includes a list of funds and contact information.

Pèp advertisement. 'Now the accent is on European Growth'. THE MERCURY EUROPEAN GROWTH PEP. Includes contact information and a Mercury Asset Management logo.

Small print text at the bottom left of the page, including performance figures and disclaimers.

Small print text at the bottom right of the page, including performance figures and disclaimers.

French retreat within reach



In the pink: this dream house in the South of France could be yours through FPDSavills

The scent of lavender and the buzz of cicadas on a hot day. The prospect of a lunch on the terrace overlooking the bay, followed by an afternoon on a private beach, swimming in warm Mediterranean waters.

Fantasy or reality? In the middle of a great English summer, the idea of transporting yourself to an idyllic location in the South of France sounds more than compelling. Owning a house on the Côte d'Azur is traditionally the preserve of film stars, millionaires and playboys. However, it is possible to own property in the region without a Trump-scale bank balance.

UK buyers have been helped by the cooling of property prices in France, the strong pound and the opportunity to tap in to France's cheaper mortgage rates. FPDSavills, the international property agent, says that asking prices on the French Riviera have become more reasonable and British buyers are getting more for their money. For example, a property which two years ago was priced at Fr5.7 million would, at the exchange rate of 7.5 francs to the pound, have cost £760,000. Today the same

The pound's strength makes for tempting property bargains across the Channel, says Clare Stewart

property would be priced at Fr4 million which, with an exchange rate of about ten francs to the pound, would cost £400,000. In total, the change means a net reduction of 47.4 per cent.

The strength of sterling has meant that British buyers have turned back to France," says Patrick Dring at Knight Frank International, the agents. "The peak of the market was 1990-91, since when it has fallen by up to 40 per cent."

The most desirable areas remain those nearest the sea, such as Cap Ferrat and Cap d'Antibes. Other sought-after areas include St Paul de Venice, Mougins, St Tropez and Cannes.

At the top end of the market expect to pay upwards of £1 million for a house with film star looks and views to match. Among Knight Frank's

current selection of properties is Villa Mariposa, situated at Cap Ferrat, with stunning views over Villefranche Bay and set in terraced gardens. The four-bedroom villa, which also has a separate guesthouse, is on the market at Fr28 million.

A little further up the coast at Beaufeu FPDSavills is offering an elegant Belle Epoque mansion, looking out across the bay, priced at Fr32 million.

In addition to being near the sea, older character houses generally command higher prices than more modern properties. Particularly sought-after by UK buyers are homes within easy reach of the main airports at Nice, Marseilles and Montpellier.

Away from the Riviera, Nigel Paige, from Authentic France, the agent, highlights demand across the Alpes Maritimes, also the Luberon area (made famous by Peter Mayle, the writer) and central Languedoc, where older, restored houses are in shorter supply and so fetch good prices.

Moving inland from the coast usually means you get more for your money. About 50 minutes' drive from Nice, FPDSavills is offering a restored 19th-century priory near Fayence. The property, which has seven bedrooms, a barn suitable for conversion, pool and gardens, is priced at Fr4.5 million.

But if you plan a more modest outlay, there is still plenty of choice. "The great divide in price is between houses with or without land. If you are prepared to go into the villages you can find ideal holiday homes," says Mr Paige. "You can still find restored village houses between £30,000 and £50,000."

Mr Paige says that despite the attractions of price and location, a property in France should not be bought primarily as an investment, although it is possible to earn rental income during the summer.



Rustic charm: tranquillity on the market with Knight Frank

Prices are negotiable when purchasing a property and given that fees and taxes are usually around 10-12 per cent of the price, Mr Paige advises clients to offer a price that will cover that cost.

Michael Treganowan, who runs the French Property Shop, says the process of buying a property in France is "a lot easier and more clear-cut" than in England.

"Once the vendor and purchaser have agreed on a deal, a pre-sale document is drawn up by a lawyer. This is signed by both parties and is a binding contract, subject to the legalities of the deal being checked out," he says.

The purchaser pays a 10 per cent deposit at this stage, and

the strict system means that people do not walk away from deals or gazump with last-minute offers.

Mr Treganowan estimates that sorting out the purchase paperwork takes on average about two months, and normally one lawyer acts for both purchaser and vendor. He estimates that the total legal package, including legal fees and stamp duty, comes to 10 per cent of the purchase price, depending on the size of the property. The French Property Shop specialises in houses in Southwest France, including the Charente, Gironde, Dordogne, Vienne and Lot regions. Although areas in the Dordogne, for example, are very popular with UK buyers, in general the South West is noticeably cheaper than Provence.

Among properties being marketed by the French Property Shop is a three-bedroom riverside house which features the remains of a watermill alongside. It is situated between Angoulême and Périgueux and is priced at Fr1.06 million.

The French Property Shop: 01892 852449. Authentic France: 0181-563 9873. Knight Frank: 0171-629 8171. FPDSavills: 0171-409 9007.

YAWN
The Growth fund top 10

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personal financial service
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WITH interest rates lower in France than in the UK, taking out a French franc mortgage can work out much cheaper than a UK mortgage (Clare Stewart writes). The Woolwich, through Banque Woolwich, its French subsidiary, offers a variable rate of 3.9 per cent for an initial three months, after which it switches to 4.9 per cent.

It is also offering a fixed rate of 5.8 per cent, which can be fixed for the entire term of the loan. Part fixed and part variable options are also available. The Woolwich has a free guide to buying property in France, available by calling 0181-298 4400. For information on mortgages, call 0181-298 3036.

Mortgage offers from the Abbey National include a 1 per cent discount on the variable rate of 4.95 per cent for the first year. There is a minimum loan period of ten years and if partly or wholly redeemed in the first seven years, there is a penalty of six months' interest. For details on Abbey National rates, call 0800 449090.

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Morgan Stanley's three-pronged attack

Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, the US fund management group, this week launched a UK-based investment house aimed at the private investor. The company will initially offer three funds: one will invest in companies in the United Kingdom, another will invest in European companies, while the third will hold shares worldwide.

The funds are to be structured as open-ended investment companies (Oeic), an investment structure that may eventually replace unit trusts. These funds, unlike unit trusts, will not carry a bid/offer spread, nor will they carry an initial charge. However, the funds will carry an annual management charge of 1.6 per cent.

The fact that they carry only an annual management charge means that they are

unlikely to be distributed by independent financial advisers, because the company will not pay commission. Instead, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter plans to attract investment via a multi-million-pound advertising campaign.

According to research carried out by the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (Auitf), the majority of the investing public would rather buy their funds via the mail, rather than through independent financial advisers or over the telephone. The funds will also not carry exit charges or transfer penalties.

The company's own research indicates

Caroline Merrell reports on the launch of an investment house aimed at the retail market

that scrapping the front-end charge will make the funds about 30 per cent to 75 per cent cheaper than their unit trust counterparts.

For example, charges on a £5,000 investment in an average UK growth and income fund are around £350 in the first year. This compares with charges of just £96 on Morgan Stanley's UK growth and income fund. Over five

years, the charges on an average UK fund rise to nearly £800, compared with the £550 charged by Morgan Stanley.

Richard Brereton, executive director, said: "Our research shows that there is a gap in the UK market for sophisticated investors who want to buy directly from fund managers."

He added: "Furthermore, this move is

in line with the UK Government's commitment to encourage providers to offer investors more flexible and transparent products."

In America, nearly half of the billions of dollars invested in mutual funds, the US equivalent to unit trusts, is held in no-load funds.

If the launch is successful, then Morgan Stanley may consider diversifying to offer pension products, in anticipation of government plans for second-tier plans.

The global equity fund will follow the investment strategy of Morgan Stanley's institutional global equity fund. This

latter fund has outperformed its benchmark index since its launch in October 1989. It also carries a triple-A rating from Standard & Poor's Fund Research, the fund rating agency.

The continental equity fund will hold the shares of companies across Europe including the UK. It aims to outperform the benchmark index by between 1 per cent and 2 per cent per annum.

The UK growth and income fund will hold shares in UK blue chip companies such as Glaxo, BP and Lloyds TSB. The fund will mainly be invested for capital growth but will offer some income. Morgan Stanley aims to outperform the benchmark FTSE all-share index by between 1 per cent and 2 per cent per annum. The minimum investment in the funds has been set at £1,000 until the end of December 1998.

Susan Emmett voices fears that people will stay uncovered in face of higher premiums

Holidaymakers in danger

The dreary weather has caused a boom in holiday bookings, with many people deciding to head overseas to escape the rain. But it is feared that nearly three million holidaymakers will be travelling completely uninsured this year.

Travelling uninsured is risky. Commercial Union insures six million holidays a year — 20 per cent of the market — and estimates that 500,000 of those with cover will make a claim.

Figures published this week show that the most common reason for claiming for cancelling a holiday is illness, with 55,000 claims. People visiting the US are the most likely to claim for hospital bills while Spain is the destination with the highest level of claims for lost luggage and from victims whose holidays have been ruined by pickpockets.

The insurers are worried that even greater numbers of

holidaymakers will travel without cover when the insurance premium tax rises on August 1. The tax rate on policies bought direct from insurers or through brokers will rise from 4 per cent to 17.5 per cent in line with cover sold by travel companies.

For many holidaymakers, the increase will mean an extra £13.50 on every £100 worth of premium and anyone who is due to travel abroad more than once in a year should consider taking out annual cover before the tax increase comes into effect, to avoid the extra costs.

Not all insurers are planning to put up their prices and, even with the tax rise, travel insurance bought direct is still cheaper than cover offered by travel companies.

Club Direct has promised to keep prices at the current level and Columbus Travel will not raise all of its premiums. Club Direct will cover a

family of two adults and an unlimited number of children travelling in Europe for 17 days for £44.90. Family annual policies cost £85 for Europe and £115 for worldwide travel, without ski cover.

Julie Philpott, marketing director at Columbus, said: "There is not going to be an increase across the board. Some policies will stay the same, some will increase and we are hoping to reduce some of the prices. We are trying to be more sophisticated and more flexible in our approach to the increase in tax."

Currently, Columbus is charging a family of four travelling in Europe for two weeks £39 for standard cover and £54 for supercover. Worldwide annual insurance is £132.75.

Even after the tax rise, it will still be cheaper to buy insurance direct from insurers or brokers than from travel companies.

Insurance for a family of four travelling to Spain for two weeks costs £129.50 from Thomson, £113.80 from All-tours and £139.82 from Going Places and Lunn Poly.

Tesco, which recently launched a travel insurance service, would charge the same family £64.53 after the tax increase.

From August, Direct Line will charge £50.37. Cover from Europ Assistance costs even less at £35.20 (before the rise in insurance tax) and £39.77 after. But the most competitive quotes comes from Churchill, which launched travel insurance last year. Family cover currently costs £29.25 for travel in Europe and will increase to £33.05.



Nearly three million people will go off on holiday this year without bothering to cover themselves adequately

LEAGUE TABLES OF VISITORS CLAIMS					
	MEDICAL	GASTRIC	LUGGAGE	PICK-POCKET	DEPARTURE DELAY
1st	USA	Turkey	Spain	Spain	Spain
2nd	Spain	Spain	Turkey	Turkey	USA
3rd	Turkey	USA	USA	USA	Greece
4th	Greece	Greece	Greece	Greece	Turkey
5th	France	France	France	France	France

Note: around 10% of holiday makers travel without travel insurance. The countries raised on percentages of holiday claims. Source: Commercial Union Travel Claims

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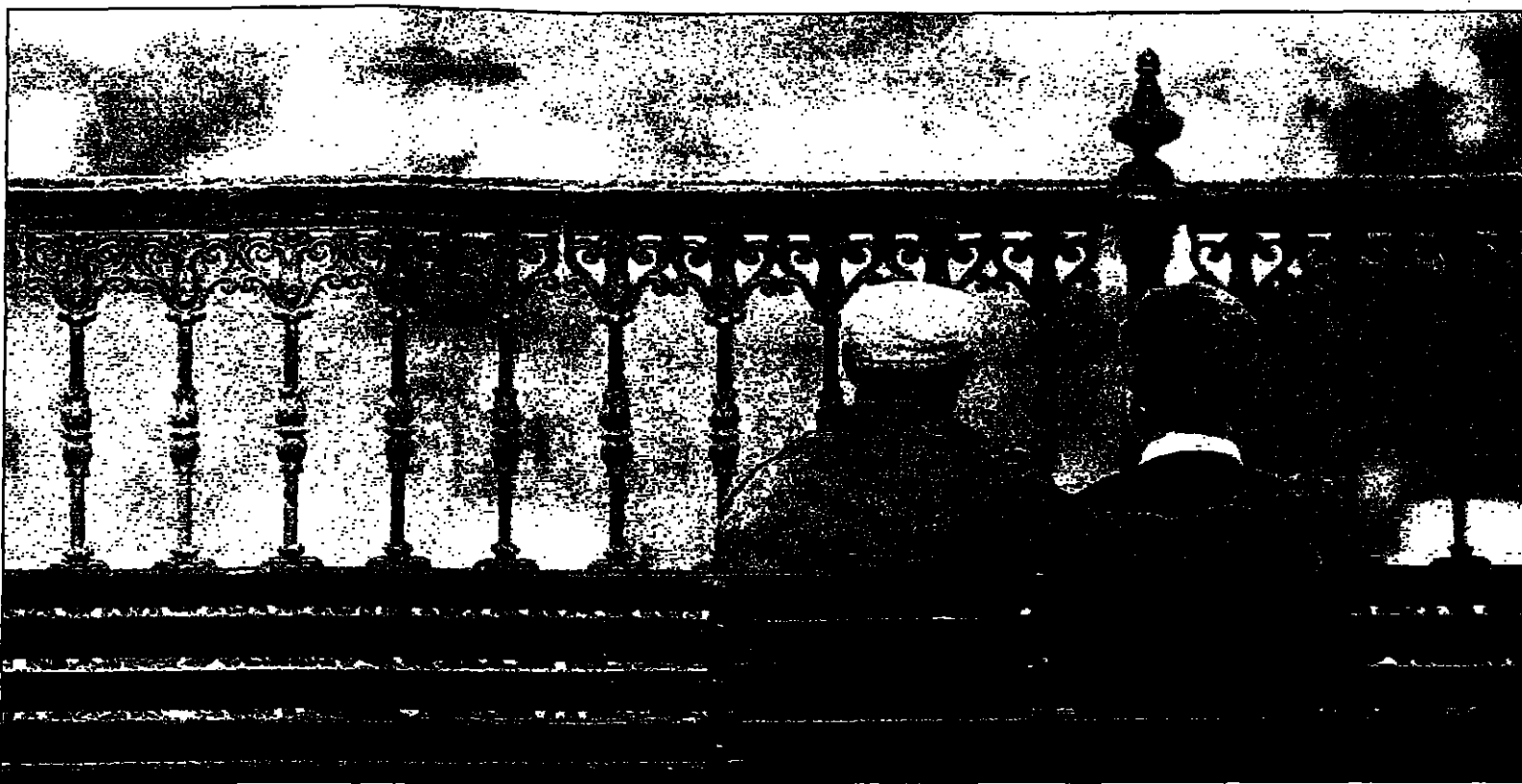
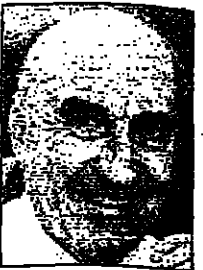
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Graham Searjeant on a case of Murphy's Law

WEEKEND MONEY

CRASH COURSE 47

Safe havens for the more nervous investor



Left in the cold: pensioners who had the prudence to take out a personal or company pension will not benefit from the Government's latest largesse

Harman's selective pension booster attacked

State pensioners' joy over a £25 billion package aimed at improving their lot has soured after the Government revealed its bonanza would be selective.

Harriet Harman, Social Security Secretary, announced that the poorest pensioners whose sole income is the state pension will get extra income support.

David Harrison, a tax expert at Kison's Impcy, the chartered accountants, urged the Government to come clean if it planned to means-test the state pension.

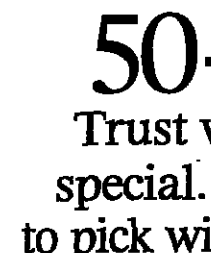
Meanwhile, a "citizens jury" run by Age Concern has rejected the idea that personal or work pensions should be made compulsory.

GAVIN LUMSDEN

INSIDE



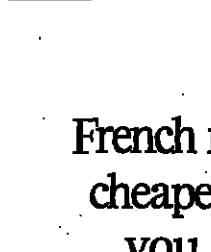
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54 French retreat cheaper than you think

BUSINESS NEWS PAGES 22-27

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

Nationwide's last call for mutual support

Anne Ashworth and Susan Emmett report on the countdown to the society's vital vote next week

In the closing days of its campaign to retain its mutuality, which culminates at next Thursday's annual meeting, the Nationwide has extended the deadline for those who wish to cast their votes in the building society's branches.

lition of the 4.9 million eligible savers and borrowers had already cast their votes. The Nationwide will announce on Monday whether it will bring forward the announcement of the ballot to select directors, which would normally be made at the annual meeting.

ment consultant, and Michael Hardern, a freelance butler. Unlike the eccentric Mr Hardern, Mr Muir, sole director of Accountancy Support, based in Slough, has been a low-key candidate.

that his accountant was finalising the figures. Brian Davis, Nationwide's chief executive, should learn which way members are voting this weekend.

earn interest at 7.3 per cent. Halifax's nearest equivalent, the Premium Savings Direct, is available only to those investing £10,000 or more.

The superiority of Nationwide's deals does not impress everyone. Paul Finch, a member since 1995 and a self-confessed carpetbagger, argues that a windfall is worth more than small improvements in savers' rates.



Family fortunes: Paul Finch, with his wife, Joanna, and children, is hoping for conversion

Sellers home in on CGT savings

The Government's recent reform of capital gains tax (CGT) has given an unexpected boost to those looking to sell their second property. Hundreds of thousands of people now own a second home, either for investment purposes or to escape from city life.

reduces the taxable gain by 4 per cent a year for each year the investment is held, up to maximum of 40 per cent. The relief cannot be claimed until the asset has been held for at least three years.

lent to 70 per cent of the original investment. If investment relief had not been withdrawn, then by 2007 it would be worth another 30 per cent of £50,000, or around 25 per cent per annum.

CAROLINE MERRELL

GUINNESS FLIGHT UK EQUITY INCOME PEP advertisement. Includes headline 'No.1 UK Equity Income Trust since PEPs began.', performance table, and contact information.

So just as I told t shall Moth

Handwritten note: 50 من الأصل

SHOPPING



Mark Lamarr: where the quiff buys his riffs

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FASHION



Happy strappy: the best of the summer's high heels

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TRAVEL



Barcelona hen-night: hold on to your underwear

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ANNE ROBINSON



Yes, that's my man: when I finally met my pen pal

PAGE 3

THE TIMES

WEEKEND

SATURDAY JULY 18 1998

So I'll just do as I'm told then shall I Mother?

Men think they know their minds, but their mothers know them better, says Matthew Parris

Half way through the 1992 election campaign, an article in The Oldie recalled last year, "Francis Maude, the defending Conservative candidate in Warwickshire North, was enjoying a pub lunch with his team. One of them leaned across to him and said: 'Don't want to alarm you, Francis, but I saw an old Morris Traveller touring the lanes this morning.' Within seconds Mr Maude was on the mobile phone to his headquarters. 'I have reason to believe,' he told them, 'that my mother is at large in the constituency.' The late Lady Maude was then 77. At last year's General Election she was 82. During that election I caught up with her son canvassing as candidate in Horsham, Surrey. And his mother? 'She still has that Morris Traveller,' one of his team told me, adding (ruefully, I thought): 'She has her own itinerary.' 'Once you've been canvassed by my mother,' said Francis, 'you stay canvassed.' I reminded him of a report that his mother had been seen, foot wedged in the door of a lifelong Labour voter, shouting through the gap: 'So I'll put you down as a 'don't know' shall I?' 'It rings true,' he said, mournfully. I asked him where she was now. 'Er, somewhere in the extreme west of the constituency,' he said, avoiding my eyes. We were in the extreme east of the constituency. I felt sure that an instruction had gone out to prevent members of the press making contact with Lady Maude. Apparently, Francis Maude's mother, no longer with us, was a marvellous person: and you could tell that her son was immensely proud and fond of her. But you could also tell that this sharp, dry, rich, chilled-out, clever and successful man, whom I have never seen rattled by any political argument — who last week confronted the Chancellor of the Exchequer across the Commons floor, attacked him for his spending plans, and stayed cool in the face of a barrage of abuse from the Government benches — was unnerved at the possibility of encountering his mother while in the presence of the press. I know just how he felt. When I was a Tory candidate myself, defending West Derbyshire against a strong Liberal challenge, my own mother made an appearance in the constituency around election time. I think she intended to be helpful, but any electoral good this might have done me was wiped out by her remarking to constituents that she was not a Conservative at all, but a lifelong Liberal. Another of her habits is to inform people that I may think I am a Tory, but I'm not really, underneath. Apparently, it's just a stage I'm going through. She says the same of my securely-held and (I hope) carefully-argued atheism. It seems I don't realise

Continued on page 2



Matthew Parris with his mother Theresa. "I am 48 but she is as certain of my real opinions as she was when I needed to be winded or have my nappy changed"

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The brave war reporter admitted that he did once say 'arse', but he wouldn't say it now, in front of his mother

Continued from page 1 that I do believe in God. Mothers speak of their sons as though we were still in the pram, our infant wants and needs communicated not really by speech, but through their own maternal telepathy.

My own, Theresa, is as certain of my real opinions at the age of 48 as she once was of when I needed to be winded, or have my nappy changed.

I was not therefore surprised when, in a BBC studio at Broadcasting House a few days ago — my mother beside me — she leaned across to Barbara Sweeney, mother of the Observer's brave and award-winning foreign correspondent, John Sweeney, and said (of a serious opinion I had just expressed): "Matthew doesn't mean that. He just says things to produce an effect. He always has, ever since he was little." If she had leaned down to pick up my rattle and put it gently back into my pram, this would have fitted the mood.

My mother is 72. She and I were interviewing John Sweeney and his mother for one of a six-part series we are recording for the Radio 4 slot provided while Libby Purves's *Midweek* takes a summer break. Each week my mother and I interview a matching mother-and-son team. Sometimes the son is well-known, the mother less so; and sometimes it is the mother who is famous, the son unheard-of.

Terry Parris is no stranger to radio, though it was called wireless then and I was in nappies. In Johannesburg, where I was born, she did some on-air work for the South African Broadcasting Corporation in the late 1940s. Her BBC debut came a couple of years later when we returned to England. Mum read one of her own stories for *Children's Hour*, in Manchester. She would have been about 25. If a recording exists I would love to hear it but BBC archives are a jungle we have yet to penetrate.

When we moved to Cyprus in 1954 (I was four) my mother became what we would now call a disc-jockey — a "comper" then — on the Forces Broadcasting Service in Nicosia. She was voted "Miss Kitchen-Voice, 1956" and the troops used to write, begging for photographs. She would have been about 30. After that, the arrival of four more children (I am the eldest of six) and the demands of my father's job, which took the family back to England again, then to Southern Rhodesia, then Jamaica, then Spain, rather interrupted my mother's media career.

Interrupted? Nearly half a century has intervened between Terry's BBC debut and the series we are now recording. As a child I never thought of mothers as having potential careers, but when I listen to her now — and realise she could read out the telephone directory and make it sound like a warm and intimate expose of the interior lives of ordinary citizens — it is all too clear to me what she was sacrificing for us, her children. I wonder whether, behind the drive of many busy and "achieving" men, lie the blocked (or diverted) ambitions of a talented mother?

But what if those talents are not frustrated? What if a woman achieves a blazingly successful career and manages to combine this with raising a son? How does the boy do? Five years ago I first put to the BBC the idea that a mother and son team, interviewing famous women and their little-known sons, or famous men and their unheard-of mothers, might shed light on that mother of all bonds: the mother-son relationship. I kept plugging away until someone in the Corporation agreed. *Mothers and Sons* will be the result.

We are not a two-person interrogation team and I have no interest in relentless probing. Anyway, my mother wouldn't let me if I tried. Our aim is more subtle. There are pretences you cannot make when Mum is listening. It's rather as I imagine the Last Judgment might prove (were there to be one. Mum, which there won't). A man is different when his mother is there; and women change when they are with their sons. Put them together and you have different individuals from the people the world knows when they're on their own. Interviewing Barry McGuigan and his



Matthew Parris, left, with his mother Theresa, brother Roger and sister Belinda in Jamaica in 1968. "We realised in adult life that she had sacrificed her potential career in broadcasting to bring up six children"



Theresa with Matthew in Johannesburg in 1949. The family moved around a lot

mother, Katie(Barry was one of eight children), the man came to the fore and the fly-weight champion receded into the background — for Katie was less than sure that she had wanted Barry to be a boxer in the first place. But she knew he would never be deflected from his dream from the moment (she told us) of his first fight, which was with a chimpanzee in a zoo. So she wanted him to succeed, wanted him to win — yet shrank from watching.

She told my mother how, alone in their small town, she would not watch the big match on television, or listen to it on the radio. She retreated into a room, closed the door, and tried to block the sounds of cheering from everywhere in the town outside. Yet she waited eagerly for his phone call after the match. Barry always called his mother first.

Between mothers and sons (as, sometimes, between fathers and daughters) the bond can be perhaps more potent than any other relationship we ever establish. More potent, I suspect, than is often the case where parent and offspring are the same sex and submerged rivalries intrude. All his adult life, a man like Barry (or me, or John Sweeney) can walk around with the unconscious memory of an early time when he was the king of somebody else's affections, the centre of her attention, beneficiary of an unconditional love. Mothers will love us even if we fail: love us without any ulterior motive; love us without rivalry and without reserve. I think that is what makes us fly. I think it is also what makes us such pigs.

But back to that green baize table for a moment, facing Barbara and John Sweeney. Barbara admitted she doesn't read everything John writes — especially where the foreign



Matthew at the age of six. He is the oldest of six children

conflict he is reporting is gruesome or the circumstances dangerous. She would rather not dwell on unpleasantness. "So what do you have to say to this you wrote, John?" I asked. "It's about the job I do. You said that political journalism was 'licking the arse of those in authority.' Is that really what you think?" My mother, beside me, tightened her jaw. I used to be reprimanded for saying "hell". And now this word! Arse! Barbara Sweeney stiffened. John Sweeney flinched. She looked at him sternly. He is 40. He began to stammer. "Oh I, er, I'm sure I wouldn't have used that word," Barbara said, quietly, to my mum, "but if he did, I can tell you this. He didn't learn it at home."

MOTHERS AND SONS

A hard bond to break

Great comedy often turns on awkward truths. Like the *Monty Python* sketch where a bowler-hatted and besuited John Cleese is being fussed over by his mother as if he were a wayward toddler. Finally, in desperation, Cleese turns to her and says, "Mother, I am the Minister for Overseas Development!" Scratch a powerful, important or high-achieving man and you often find an assertive mother who has been driving him onward ever since earliest childhood.

Lady Randolph was tireless in advancing the interests of her dear boy, Winston Churchill. When he filed his early reports for the *Daily*

Graphic in the 1890s, she ensured her influential friends saw them. It worked: how many young journalists hobnob with grandees like Joseph Chamberlain, the Conservative Colonial Secretary of the day? Richard Branson probably owes something of his unconventional approach to life to his energetic mother, Eve. When he was four she, worried that he was becoming a wimp, dropped him off in a field in Devon and told him to make his own way — several miles of it — back home.

The same kind of maternal ambition can turn a boy into a successful film-maker. Connie Tarantino used to read adult literature to little Quentin when he was four. By the age of five she was taking him to see adult-rated films. "Quentin would cough and go to the popcorn stand if there was a sex scene," she remembers. As a treat for his seventh birthday she took him to see a double bill of *The Wild Bunch* and *Deliverance* — but she did let him walk out of the cinema when Bambi's mother died. There

are darker mother-son relationships than Connie and Hollywood's Prince of Darkness. The only thing that the psychopathic gangster Ronnie Kray loved more than violence was his mother, Violet, who until her death at the age of 81, exerted a commanding influence over him, even nagging him to eat properly while he was in Broadmoor. He used to sit in his cell weeping as he obsessively watched the video of Violet's funeral.

Some mothers see stardom in the stars for their darling boys. Not even the awesome weaponry and pectorals of Rambo could bend the will of the astrologer Jackie Stallone when she refused

point-blank to go to Sylvester's (third) wedding. "I knew it would not please him but I had to say what was on my mind; I've always told my son the truth," said Jackie, who expressed her disdain for Sly's female leads by calling an actress "someone with

no ability who sits around waiting to go on alimony". It can be tough for a mother whose son grows up to be a sex symbol. When 19-year-old Ronan Keating of Boyzone was voted the most fanciable male in the country by *Smash Hits*, his mother Marie rang immediately to say she would be on the next flight from Ireland to London to cook him a proper meal. And when Marie died earlier this year of breast cancer at 54, Ronan acknowledged his debt to her. "She was my best friend," he said. "I rang her every day wherever I was in the world. I still have the name Mum programmed into my mobile phone and sometimes I ring it to see if she's really gone."



Richard Branson's mother, Eve, once left him in a field



Ronan Keating's mother, Marie, was his "best friend"



The Kray twins with their mother, Violet



Sylvester Stallone with his forthright mother, Jackie

ANGUS CLARKE

سكوا من الاصل

Anne Robinson



● A VISIT TO Barnsley House and Rosemary Verey's wonderful garden. Actually seeing her there — usually being mobbed by Americans — always surprises me. Rather like hitting the roundabout at Buckingham Palace and finding the Queen on point duty.

Most of us who perform for a living do so in short bursts. Rosemary, in her eightieth year, is on the boards for nine to ten hours at a stretch on a sunny Saturday. She says this morning she'd gone out to feed the chickens at seven and found the first arrivals. I reckon garden visitors as a breed would make excellent foot-in-the-door reporters, since tales of them trampling down gates after hours, or on the one day a garden is shut, abound. (I once lunched with Nigel Nicolson at Sissinghurst on a Monday, when it's closed, and he said it was often a very busy day for him because he found it hard to refuse those who turn up anyway — nearly always claiming to have come especially from Auckland.)

Rosemary is positively regal in greeting one after another visitor who usually declares how honoured they are to be at Barnsley. She is less patient, and quite rightly, with those who ask the names of plants, when, as she says wearily, the names are staring them in the face if they bothered to look.

● OUR OWN garden in Gloucestershire is no more than mounds of earth after weeks of activity by a JCB. But of its future I am frequently minded to echo the late Diana, Princess of Wales: there are three people in my marriage. Penrose and R. Verey, they are one on their love of formal gardens and the use of box, and me, the ignorant gooseberry who knows only she doesn't want geraniums or hydrangea (an unpleasant, lingering memory of the smells in the Victorian conservatory off the library at my convent boarding school).

Over lunch with Rosemary I add my dislike of Portugal laurel. The remark goes unchallenged for a

while, then she demands: "What exactly do you have against Portugal laurel?" Here I can do no more than evoke the baked-bean argument. I commend it to anyone faced with having to explain their questionable taste: "What do mean, you think Laurence Olivier was a ham?" Or "How can you possibly say the Taj Mahal was a letdown?" I do not like baked beans. Full stop. End of discussion. There is no point

me trying to explain why. Even less anyone trying to persuade me otherwise.

● DURING the time I had a Radio 2 Saturday morning show (shamelessly biased towards women) there came into our midst a gent who signed himself Plucky Little Man. A retired colonel who lived alone in Surrey and reported regularly on the cleaning out of his "hutch", his

other weekend chores and his general struggle with life as a mere male. His missives became an integral part of the show.

To be honest, I had no idea if he really was a colonel. It didn't matter. He made us all laugh. Then last year, idly looking up at my television during the Tory party conference, I saw someone of precisely the same name making a speech. This Col Philip Howes was offering

such gems as "I don't want to see the defence budget spent on compensation payments to pregnant guardswomen" and "I want my soldiers firing bullets at the enemy, not casting sheep's eyes at each other".

Yesss. I thought, that's my Plucky Little Man!

● AND SO, this week, to the Special Forces Club in Knightsbridge to finally meet my pen pal. No disappointments here. Philip, I learn, was a member of the War Cabinet briefing team during the Falklands campaign and wrote the daily press bulletins. Those memorably delivered in funeral tones by another MoD man, Ian McDonald. He of the one tie and machine-washable suit. How much better if they had let the colonel, a natural performer, speak his own words.

The reason for our rendezvous is Philip's wish to present me with his about-to-be published book, *The Catalytic Wars*, a unique study of the development of warfare

between 1860 and 1870. Anything written in his engaging style deserves to succeed. And, I promise him, his work will be eagerly read by this mere female even though she privately thinks any war is mostly about poor mothers' sons needlessly dying. I also hope his publishers let everyone know he is not a dry historian, but a star light-entertainment turn. Much more fun for everyone to hear Philip plugging his scholarly wares and getting us excited about the rise of Prussia in the 19th century than what normally passes for intelligent chat on talk shows.

● LATER, I note Philip has dedicated his book thus: "In memory of David Craig, MA (Oxon), Head of History and Cavendish Librarian of Eastbourne College, 1938-1962. To whose profound scholarship and ripe wit the author owes his life-long interest in modern history." How many teachers today, I wonder, would deserve such a generous, spine-tingling accolade?

A light that could shine for us still

A candlelit vigil is the best way to remember Diana, says Marcus Binney



A mourner sleeps near flowers at Kensington Palace

As the controversy mounts over proposals for a Diana memorial garden in Kensington Gardens, two points have become crystal clear. First, Kensington residents are implacably opposed, and reasonably so, to anything resembling a permanent Diana attraction, that would become a stopping point on every London coach tour. Second, visitors to Kensington Gardens are on the increase and many of these come to pay their own personal tribute. Even now more than 100 bouquets are left every week.

This will increase sharply on the anniversary of her death on August 31, and the days immediately following. Precisely because politicians have been so slow in agreeing any form of London memorial, the people will make their own, returning to lay flowers, light candles and leave messages, as they did a year ago.

No one who saw those huge, solemn grief-stricken crowds thronging not only Kensington Gardens but the Mall, late into the night, can fail to have been impressed by the strength of public feeling. They had the character of a vigil, complete with thousands of candles burning late into the night.

A simple way to mount a dignified and appropriate commemoration of Diana a year after her tragic death would be to line the walks of Kensington Gardens with night lights, lit just before dusk and allowed to burn late into the night. This would be a beautiful sight, and also a very unpretentious form of commemoration, not requiring any excessive expense.

The night lights would have the magical quality of Christmas illuminations — like, for example those on Campden Hill Square in west London where, on Christmas Eve each year, the lights are turned out and every window is filled with candles.

Just how well such a technique can work in a garden is evident each Saturday this summer in the French chateau which provides the backdrop to the recent film, *The Man in the Iron Mask*. The vast formal gardens at the Château de Vaux le Vicomte, near Fontainebleau, were laid out in the mid-17th century a few years before work started on Kensington Palace gardens.

Every Saturday, the owner of Vaux, the Comte de Votzé holds a *visite aux chandelles* — a candle-lit visit. Paths, terraces, steps and fountains are lined with night lights which allow you to explore the gardens and breadth of the gardens even on a starless night. In the house itself, dozens of candles burn on each windowsill, an



Creating a memorial to Diana has been beset by problems

effect infinitely more beautiful than electric floodlights.

A Diana vigil would operate on the principle of the signs on the best-kept beaches saying "please leave nothing behind but your footprints". It would involve no permanent works, no new flowerbeds, hedges or shrubs, no special paving, no permanent lighting.

This proposal has several other advantages. It would all be done in a week or ten days — at most the distance between her death and her funeral. This way it would avoid clogging Kensington with traffic during the day and not precipitate a huge increase during the day when residents and their children are using the gardens.

There would be no special provision for tourist buses. People wishing to pay their respects would come by foot or public transport (there are six Underground stations near the park, as well as numerous red bus routes).

This would help to keep the all-important atmosphere of a

personal tribute and avoid the feeling of a rubber-necking outing. By lighting the edges of the paths rather than the lawns, people could be encouraged to keep to hard surfaces, thus protecting the grass in front of Kensington Palace, which was completely worn away last summer.

If crowds prove very large it would be possible to extend the vigil away from Kensington Palace towards the Mall and St James Palace where many people came to pay tribute last time.

People could walk past the Albert Memorial along South Carriage Drive — which here is a purely pedestrian walk, anyway. Further east, where traffic uses South Carriage Drive on the way to Hyde Park Corner, the road could be closed in the evening — without great inconvenience to motorists — so that people could walk the length of the tree-lined thoroughfare.

As this would be an evening event, it would also be simple to close Constitution Hill and

the Mall. London's highway managers might even be persuaded to stop the traffic at Hyde Park Corner at two or three-minute intervals (it is already subject to traffic lights). This would allow people to cross Hyde Park Corner instead of being forced to use the hated underpasses.

All this would be a far simpler and more memorable way to reclaim space for the public than some of the expensive paving schemes now being proposed.

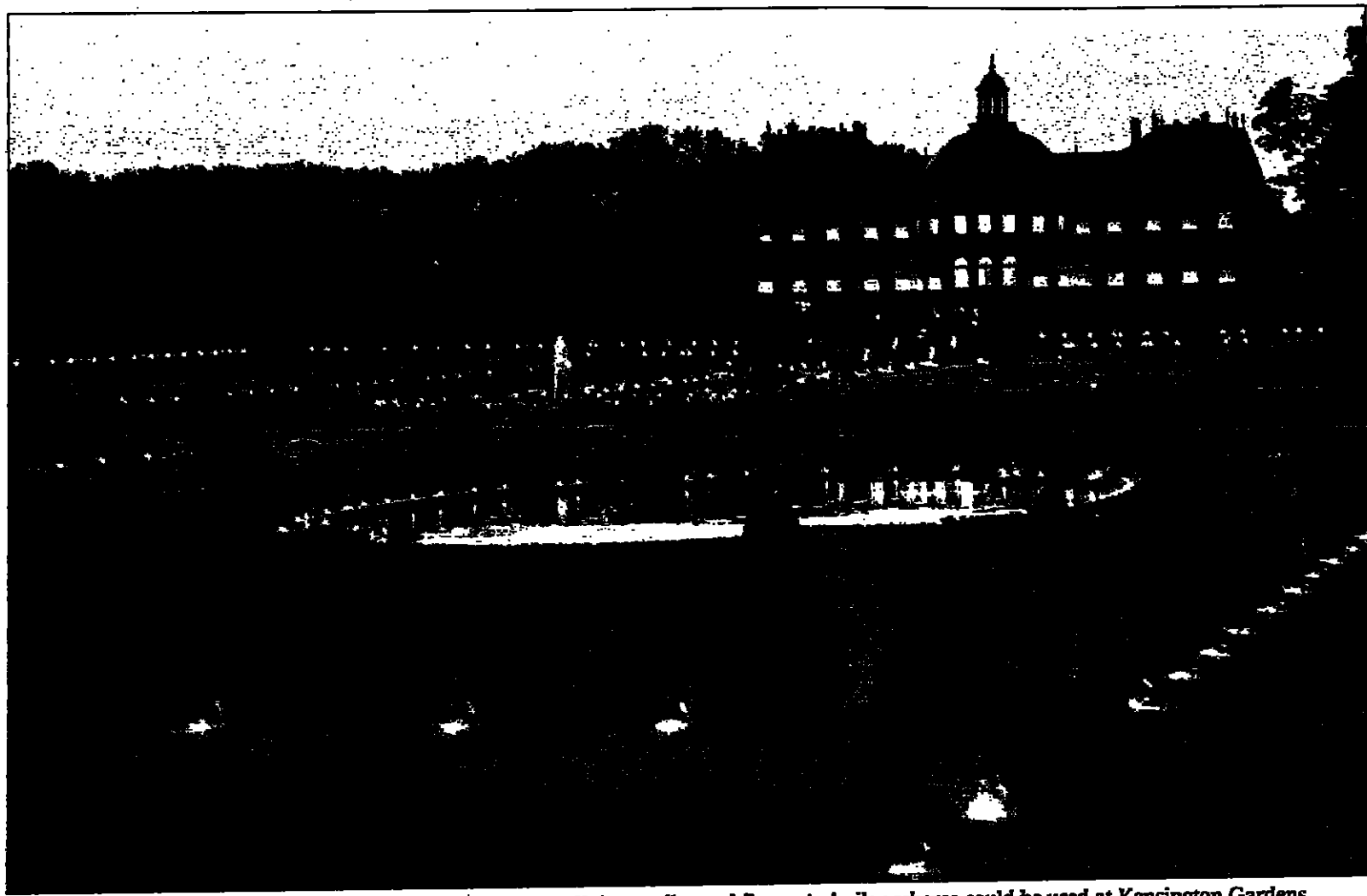
Early this year there were high hopes at the Royal Parks Agency and English Heritage of creating a spectacular garden in memory of the Princess. Yet the fury of the residents, the pugmaciousness of Alan Clark and the withering scorn of the art critic Brian Sewell, have created a situation where neither Gordon Brown nor Chris Smith are willing to appear at the opening of an exhibition on the proposals — now being held beside the Albert Memorial.

And, as Sewell indignantly pointed out, the proposals aren't proposals at all, just diagrams of where a garden might be. At this rate, the garden will be longer in the making than the Albert Memorial.

Tired of delays, Queen Victoria finally opened the memorial before the statue of Albert was in place. She, the grieving widow, was no longer prepared to wait.

This time it will be Londoners who make their own tribute. Of course there is an argument that nothing should be done to provoke a new surge of public grief, but the overwhelming likelihood is that whatever the Government does or does not do — the public will take to their feet. And a crowd will become a throng.

The anniversary will inevitably be a media event with commemorative tributes filling the press and television. Many individuals will also want to pay their own personal tributes and grieve in a quiet, dignified and respectful vigil. A year later, grief at the loss of Diana is almost as great as ever. Come August, the crowds will be back.



The Château de Vaux le Vicomte, near Fontainebleau, lit by candles and flares. A similar scheme could be used at Kensington Gardens

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Doesn't the haircut give it away?



Sounds That Swing, Mr Koumis's Camden record shop

Comedian and TV presenter Mark Lamarr confesses his love for rock'n'roll on vinyl to Joe Warwick

I can't help but ask Mark Lamarr if Sounds That Swing, a rock'n'roll record emporium, is really his favourite shop or just a convenient choice to promote his new Radio 2 show, *Shake Rattle and Roll*, which is devoted to rock'n'roll music. "Well, actually, there's this shop down Chalk Farm road where you can turn into a transvestite almost immediately," comes the deadpan reply. "But I've only passed that. My favourite shop to drive past and grin at is that one."

my favourite shop

aesthetic, I suppose. It's like the difference between an antique chair and an MFI put-together — they both do the same thing but there's something magical about records."

Shopping for records is, without doubt, Lamarr's favourite pastime and this, indeed, is his favourite record shop. He is a record junkie: "Every spare day I've got is spent record shopping," he says. "Ask most second-hand record shops in London and they'll say I've been in there."

"Yeah, but you can spread jam on CDs and they'll still play," jokes Mr Koumis. Lamarr also likes the fact that the shop's prices are more reasonable than other rock'n'roll stores, although this seems to be irrelevant as, according to Mr Koumis, Lamarr never spends any money there. "He trades his records all the time."

"I've spent one or two pounds at the most," confesses Lamarr. "I go to the States as much as I can on record-buying sprees. I have these holidays where I just stand up to my knees in vats of CDs and vinyl." Although he can get most of what he wants in Sounds That Swing — and is allowed to smoke in there too — he says that finding rock'n'roll is much easier in America.

"During that period most of the British stuff was pitiful," he says. "There are thousands of great records that came across from America in that period and only about 15 or 20 that came out of England that were anywhere near as good."

Although early rock'n'roll is his favourite type of music, it's not the only thing he listens to. "On the radio I've done reggae shows and indie shows. I don't like Celine Dion but I'll listen to most things," he says. At 31 he does not see his passion for the sounds of the Fifties and Sixties as surprising. "In the late Seventies it wasn't that unusual, really, with *Grease*, and Elvis dying. I don't see it as something

backward looking; I just think it is great music," he says. He's not into any of the other trappings of the period, despite the Fifties throwback tag that he was lumbered with by Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer in their surreal comedy quiz *Shooting Stars*. The one exception, of course, is the haircut which he says "just stuck". Lamarr lived in Camden, ten minutes from the shop, until a couple of years ago, when he felt he had outgrown the area and moved to Chiswick. Although he has spoken recently about turning 30 and calming down, he says that is not exactly true. In May this year, for example, he was arrested outside the Savoy. "I wasn't arrested for being drunk [as implied by the tabloids]," he says. "I was arrested



Mark Lamarr (left) shares a musical passion with friend and Sounds That Swing proprietor Barney Koumis (right). They met at a gig 15 years ago

GADGETS

THE Yamaha Silent Electric Violin neither looks nor behaves like a traditional wooden violin but it should be music to the ears of households boasting a budding Nigel Kennedy.

This futuristic instrument is a hybrid, part real and part moulded resin. It has a regular wooden neck, bridge, narrow body and tuning pegs mounted on to a black ABS resin chin rest and a frame outline. The violin works like a personal stereo. It has a battery-powered amplifier with volume and reverb controls and takes a pair of headphones, so the player can leave others in peace. A lead from the hi-fi can also be plugged in for regular listening through speakers or to record pieces. The "aux in" socket allows the violin to be used in karaoke mode, with users able to play along on headphones to favourite recordings.



Like any traditional violin, the strings may break occasionally. The Yamaha model takes ordinary strings so any decent music shop should be able to supply replacements.

ALARMS and barking dogs are never music to the ears of burglars, and with the Barking Dog Alarm you get both. It looks like an oversized padlock and is made from white plastic measuring 3 1/2in across with a metal hanging loop. It has a built-in vibration sensor and when physically disturbed it sounds a 110dB high-pitched alarm or a looped sample of a dog barking angrily.

TIM WAPSHOTT

● Silent Electric Violin, £499, from Yamaha (0208 356700). Barking Dog Alarm, £39.99 plus p&p, from Ideal Home Mail Order (01733 777333).

SHOPWATCH

□ **Blanc Bleu**, the nautically-inspired exclusive French label, has opened in South Kensington, west London, stocking cable-knit sweaters, sailing coats and drawstring pants that will look as good on dry land as on deck. It can be found at 1 Ives Street, London SW3 (0171-584 9302).

□ **The Austrian Bedding Company** will take a worn duvet or quilt, suck out the down, wash and sterilise it with ultra-violet light, then stitch it into a fresh cover. Find the company at 205 Belsize Road, London NW6 (0171-372 3121).

□ **The Body Shop** has launched its own magazine, which has articles on subjects such as aromatherapy for lovers and the delights of the plunge pool, as well as editorials on the glories of big bodies. Free with a £10 purchase; call 01903 731500 for your nearest branch.

□ **The Champagne Company's** hedonistic hampers are just the thing for a high summer picnic. English weather permitting. The deluxe version (£95) is aptly named *Ecstasy*, and includes a bottle of champagne, Scotch salmon, caviare and hand-made



chocolates. For countrywide mail-order call 0171-603 0877.

□ **Selfridges**, fired up by the immense popularity of its personal shopping service, has launched a parallel interiors venture. So if inspiration has deserted you, describe the room of your dreams to Anne Arlandis, the store's consul-

ant, then sit back and wait for her tailor-made sample board. Call 0171-318 3323.

□ **UPDATE: Parterre Flowers'** new concession within Aveda's flagship store at 28-29 Marylebone High Street, London W1 (0171-925 9507) has summery posies with scented herbs... Same, a contemporary design emporium, has opened in a converted brewery. British designers Tom Dixon, Michael Young and Jam, and Swedish firm Valvono (chair lounge, £340, pictured) are out in force at 146 Brick Lane, London E1 (0171-247 9992).

JUDITH WILSON

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Light work

Warm, windless evenings are the time to put candles and lamps in a garden, and to enjoy the place in a new light, writes gardening correspondent Stephen Anderton.

Absolute calm will allow even an unprotected candle to prosper through outdoor suppers, even to the lighting of cigars, but a touch of breeze will require candles with a glass chimney, or oil lamps. It is important not to mix candles and electric light, as electric light cancels out the magic of flame. Put every light on in the house if you like, make it look like the *Titanic* or *Manderley*. But restrict the garden to the flicker of natural flame.

It is worth using lamps and candles generously in seating areas or on a patio, with clusters of candles on tables and on the ground. Position lamps to guide

people round the garden, some low among foliage to set shadows dancing, some high to shine down onto the path. To add character, tuck candles or melon lanterns into sheltered niches in walls and string paper lanterns from the trees.

Make patterns in the darkness, with a ring or torches set around a circular lawn, or bribe a couple of classically-proportioned teenagers to dress in white sheets and make-up, to be living torches.

Use torches near swimming pools, where the dancing flame can partner its reflection in the water, and have some sparklers on hand to announce the more spectacular puddings at table. And, for afters, hire a fire-eater.

GARDEN LAMPS

RIGHT Imported from Turkey, the electric kiosk lantern (approx. 100cm), £520 from Marston & Langinger (0171-824 8515), is made of dull nickel with a perforated decorative motif surrounding a three-pronged light-bulb stand.

BELOW The citronella candle, on a wrought iron stake, £6.99 (77cm), from Homebase (0645 801 800) comes in a frosted glass canister in a choice of green, blue or clear.

BELOW The silver Tibetan bowl, £84, from Parks Candles (0181-830 6300) has six handles and is filled with a three-wick candle with a fresh citrus perfume.

RIGHT Made up of red, blue, yellow and green mosaic glass, the hurricane lantern, £19.95, from The Pier (0171-814 5004) casts a multi-coloured hue once a candle has been inserted.

LEFT When half-filled with water the glass hurricane lamp (from £40-£70) can support a floating candle (£4.50); good for windy spaces where bare candles would be blown out. From Avant Garden (0171-229 4406)

RIGHT Lighting with an Eastern influence, the canisters at the top of these bamboo outdoor stakes (95cm), £4.95 each from Harolds (0171-750 1234), can be filled with citronella oil, the natural insect repellent.

BELOW Shaped like a shepherd's crook, the metal-and-glass garden light, £17.95 (150cm), from Clifton Nurseries (0171-289 6851), pushes into the ground and requires a candle for illumination.

RIGHT Available by mail order from The English Garden Collection (0870 606304) are terracotta flower-pot candles in medium (£14) and small (£7.50) plus £3.50 p&p

50 من الأمل



Those with twinkling toes and slender ankles have been giving it all they've got. Seen in strappy sandals, this summer's essential style, are Victoria Adams; Sandra Bullock; Patsy Kensit; Minnie Driver; Elizabeth Hurley and Tyra Banks

The best of the summer's highs

No shoe makes a woman feel worn any quite so effectively as the strappy sandal. For many women, slipping their feet into a pair of delicate mules or fastening straps the thickness of spaghetti around their ankles is enough to signal that balmy days and evenings are here — no matter how inclement the reality. Now is the time to join them.

Fashion has elected strappy sandals to reigning status this summer, and there is no shortage of styles on offer: be it the classic silver-thin stiletto; the angular block of recent times; or the current choice, the gently curving kitten.

Strappy sandals are hardly a new fashion phenomenon, but this summer women have taken to pretty styles. The undisputed master is Manolo Blahnik, also leader of the pack which has created fantasy shoes for the Absolut Cobblers exhibition currently running at the Barbican Centre's Concourse Gallery.

While Blahnik is also expert at more substantial footwear, and is no slouch at making flat shoes look alluring, it's his strappy little nothings perched on the spindliest heels that have women flocking to his salon at Old Church Street, Kensington, London. Ever

since he stitched up a length of green suede bestrewn with leaves for designer Ossie Clark in the early 1970s, Blahnik has understood how to cosset a woman's feet in a pair of shoes with enough sex appeal to floor a man at 20 paces (take a look at his pillar box red mules for further proof).

Strappy sandals are not just skimpy, but sexy. They seductively criss-cross the foot, and tantalisingly contrast bare skin with shoe leather. It's a design principle that the best of this summer's offerings share — whether it is from the designer end (Gina's slinky scarlet slingbacks; Joseph Azagury's intricately-knotted strands of beige snakeskin; Christian Louboutin's glamorous turquoise gladiator sandals) or the high street models (baby pink suede from Barrait, red suede with straps that wrap around the ankles at Office, faux emerald-studded fuchsia mules by Shelley's).

It's also worth observing a few rules to ensure that you wear your strappy sandals with style. First, it requires a long, hard look at the condition of your feet. They have to be in tip-top shape; pedicures at best, an attack of the clippers, a nail file and a splash of polish at the very least — this summer's hot favourites being the magnificent fuchsia of

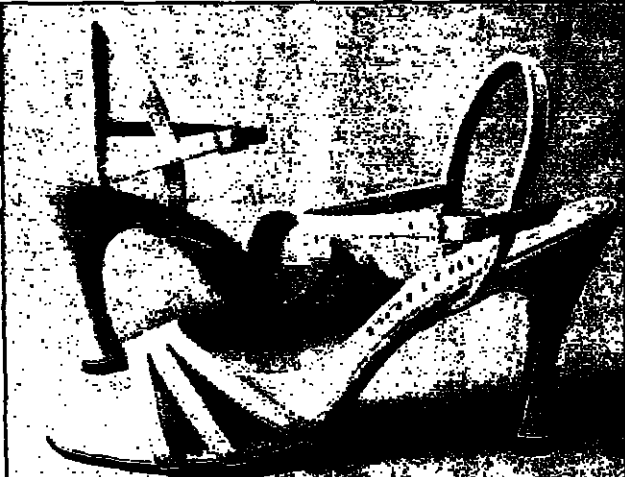
Yves Saint Laurent's shade number 17, or the metallic brown of Metropolis by Nars. The ankles and lower legs need careful attention, too — an exfoliating scrub and some fake tan will not go amiss. Then there are some simple sartorial edicts to observe: kitten heels tend to go with everything, and the higher heights are best worn with a dress. And while you can get away with wearing high heels with a pair of long, wide trousers, they won't cut it with this summer's cropped styles.

One last thing. Don't be fooled by the weather. It might seem as though we are stuck in the middle of the monsoon season right now, but strappy sandals are walking out of the shops. Pied à Terre is fast selling out of its O'Hara model, with its delicate silk flowers and kitten heel, while Russell & Bromley's Louise Threapleton reports that even though July has been more suited to wearing boots than baring the feet, sales have not been affected. "Sandals are always irresistible," she says, "they sell no matter what." You have been warned.

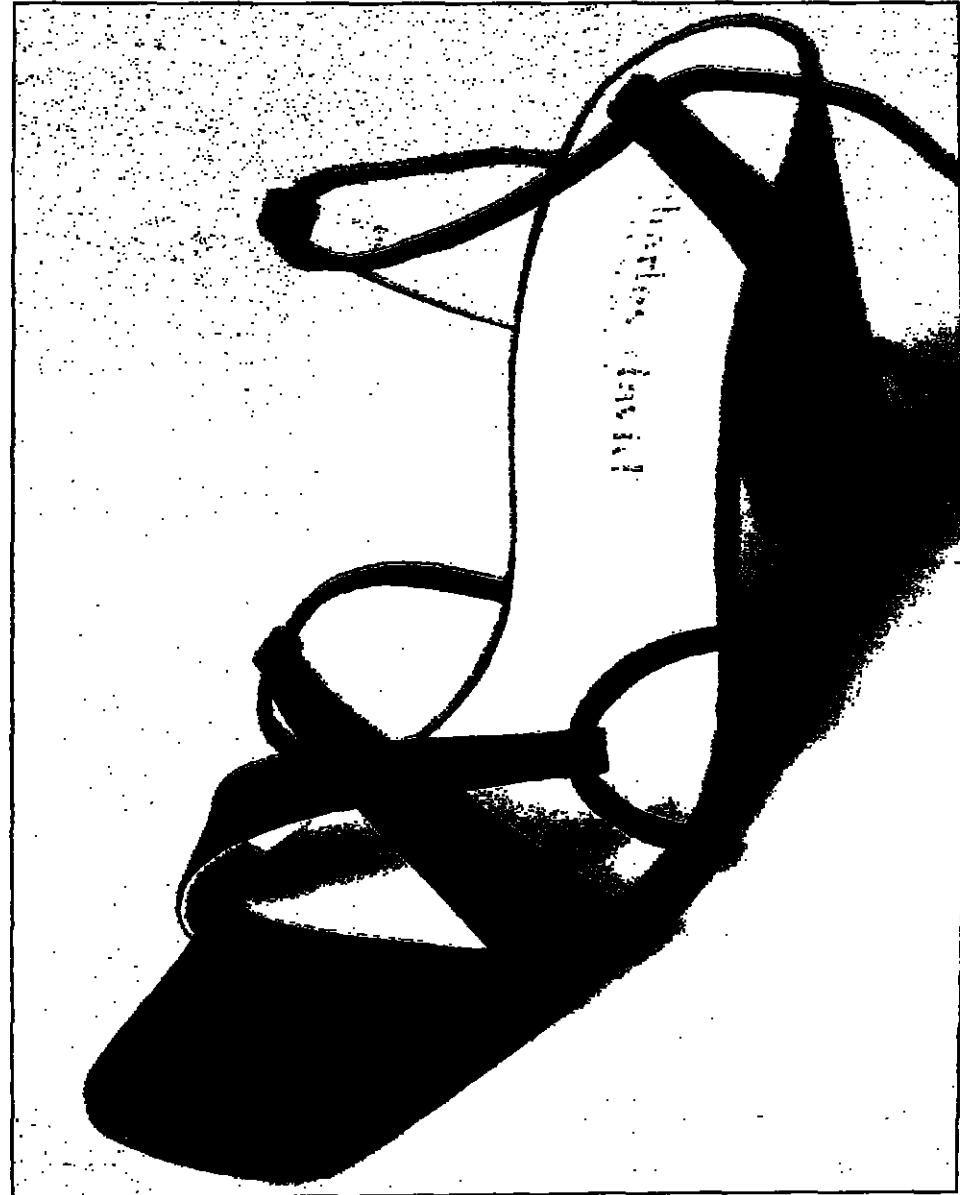
MARK HOLGATE
The author is a fashion writer at Vogue



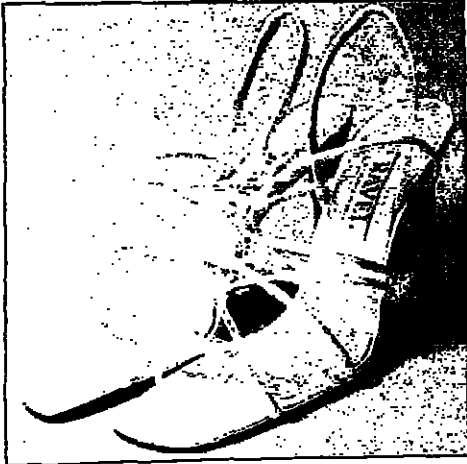
Black thong strappy sandals, £79.99 (£49 in sale), LK Bennett, 31 Brook Street, London W1 (0171-491 3005)



Baby pink suede strappy sandals, £34.99, Barratts, 396 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-629 6650)



Black strappy sandals, £69.95, Charles David, 36 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-380 3800)



White strappy sandals, £40, Ravel, 184-188 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-436 3126)



Leopard-print mules, £55, Bertie, Oxford Street, W1 (0171-629 5833)



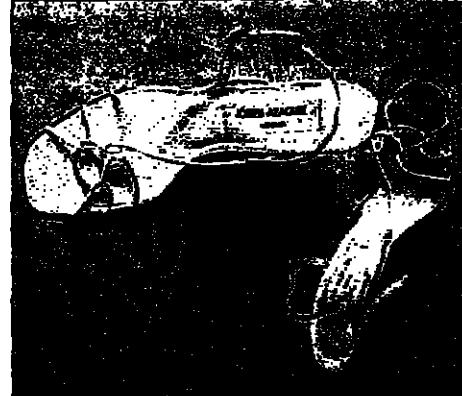
Leopard-print strappy sandals, £145, Freelance, 235 King's Road, SW3 (0171-351 4038)



Copper ankle-strap sandals, £69 in sale, Kurt Geiger, 49 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 8562)



White strappy sandals, £185, Jimmy Choo, 20 Motcomb Street, SW1 (0171-235 6008)



Beige snakeskin strappy sandals, £145, Joseph Azagury, 73 Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-486 9540)



Pillar-box red mules, £225, Manolo Blahnik, 49 Old Church Street, SW3 (0171-352 8622)



Red leather strappy sandals, £205, Gina, 189 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 2932)



Green strappy sandals, £49.99, Carvela, 14-16 Regent Street, SW1 (0171-546 1888)

THREE OF A KIND
Rings on her fingers, rings on her toes: three of the best for bare feet.
TOP RIGHT: Silver band studded with amethysts, £75, Slim Bargett, mail order (0171-354 9383)
BELOW RIGHT: Dark silver cutaway flower band, £3.99, Accessories, nationwide (0171-313 3003)
FAR RIGHT: Silver peace band, £2.50, Claire's Accessories, SW6 (0171-882 8000)



LEFT: Red-leaf design strappy sandals, £54.99, Office, 55 South Molton Street, W1 (0181-838 4447)
RIGHT: White strappy sandals, £40, Warehouse for Freemans, mail order (0800 731 9731)

Photographs by: ANNA STEVENSON
Co-ordinated by: Amandip Uppal





The latest lures for the palates and wallets of young drinkers could be Kavakaze and KavaSutra, herbal drinks containing kava, the crushed root of a Polynesian shrub

... and a Love Potion for my ageing raver friend please

Oliver Swanton sips the new-age drinks ousting alcopop

Brain Wash, Love Potion, The Drink, Red Bull, alcopops, alcostills — the shelves at the supermarket and off-licence are a confusion of lurid bottles containing wonder ingredients and lifestyle messages. The latest lures for the palates and wallets of young drinkers could be KavaSutra and Kavakaze.

Launched recently at the Natural Products Exhibition in Brighton, the drinks quickly secured national distribution and wholesale backing. Marketed on the back of their active ingredients' ecstatic effects, they are intended to appeal to ageing ravers looking for a buzz that won't stop them getting up for work.

The active ingredient, kava, is beginning to make waves in America: in February the *Wall Street Journal* predicted that it would soon join other fashionable and profitable herbal ingredients such as St John's wort (with annual sales of 47 million) and Ginkgo biloba (9.0m). Kava, which comes from the crushed root of the Polynesian shrub *Piper methysticum*, is purported to reduce anxiety and has acquired a reputation as a sexual stimulant.

still seemed to like Lucozade. Thanks to expensive repositioning as a sports drink, the comforting nursery pop unexpectedly emerged as an acid-house icon. Briefly it was cool, an identity tag signalling that you knew the score, that you were on one.

Ever since, the middle-aged men and women from marketing have spent millions chasing the acid-house generation into their late twenties. They were identified as taste-makers, early-adopters, style-leaders — marketing speak for a group that do, wear and drink today what others will take up tomorrow. Change their tastes and (theoretically) you change the country's.

They wanted yooof back on the booze so they repackaged it as fizzy pop, in bottles with hallucinogenic labels. And if the ravers refused to get drunk, the least they could do was embrace another new energy soft drink. Using thinly-veiled drug references as advertising slogans, they tried to tap into acid house — and failed.

Alcopops completely missed its sceptical and elusive target market. The patronising, ill-conceived branding seduced only teens hanging around on street corners, attracted wide-

spread criticism and alienated the taste-makers. After investing heavily in developing several new alcopops Carlsberg Tetley recently dumped them as a bad lot. Bass has been distancing itself as well — the Hooch line has been rebranded; the childish grinning fruits have fallen off the label and the sugar content is down. This summer, Bass launches Reef, an "alcostill" (no

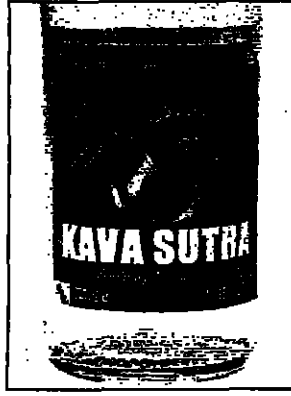


Kavakaze has acquired a reputation as a sexual stimulant

bubbles, get it?), with a low-key campaign aimed at the over-25s.

The clubbers (they stopped calling themselves ravers) weren't drinking energy drinks either. Despite the proliferation of "adult soft drinks", dosed with enough caffeine to wake the dead, few made a real dent. The previously tiny market was saturated just as a series of high-

"If the ravers refused to get drunk, the least they could do was embrace a new, high-energy soft drink"



KavaSutra: making waves

profile Ecstasy deaths prompted drug agencies to advise clubbers to keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

Many adult soft drinks fell flat but some retained a reputation as hangover cures — Lucozade did well in this respect. Red Bull also managed to weather the storm. Added to Smirnoff, it was rebranded as a mixer. Its future lies on the garage forecourt, as a pick-me-up for lorry drivers.

When the acid house generation returned to the booze they did so with a vengeance. The dance scene had changed, the ravers had grown up, started careers, even families. Despite the millions squandered on focus groups, surveys, market analysis, product development, packaging, brand recognition tests, advertising, hype,

sponsorship and PR, the new drinks were shunned in favour of beer — bottled continental lagers such as Czech Budvar and then Irish nitrokegs such as Caffreys.

One exception was Absolut. Oliver Peyton, owner of the award-winning restaurant Coast, won the licence to import the vodka from Sweden in 1987. He recognised that the product would stand out on the shelf if its alcohol content was increased to 40 per cent.

It was then marketed on a softly softly long-term curve. While other drinks manufacturers fell over themselves to sponsor club nights and dance bands, Absolut shied away from such overt and crass ploys. Instead, carefully placed niche ads and limited sponsorship of arts events ensured the vodka was adopted by the elusive taste-makers. Drunk neat from a fridge, that doubled as a bar-top display cabinet, it was a huge success — only as it crosses into the mass market has Absolut been reluctantly dropped by the in crowd for less-well-known vodkas such as Finlandia, and more recently tequila and Scotch whisky.

One way to seduce the cynical acid-house generation, it seems, is not to throw money at a product, but to let it develop almost by word of mouth. By definition, something which someone is trying too hard to sell is not cool. The multi-nationals are also reaping the benefits of

emerging independent youth consultancy firms staffed and owned by twenty-somethings. Coca Cola's recent repositioning is nifty and — for an international conglomerate — subtle. The original glass bottle was reintroduced last year and allowed to slowly trickle into selected trendy restaurants and bars. Less subdued but potentially equally triumphant is Lucozade's current NRG campaign, featuring a pastiche of the Prodigy's Firestarter video. References to the past iconoclastic value of the brand are explicit — NRG was the title of a track by acid house act Adamski and the Prodigy programmed a string of rave hits in the early 1990s.

The advertising, however, is not aimed at anyone who was raving in 1989, but a far younger group who have no meaningful recollection of that summer's events. The acid-house generation has been usurped as the marketing men's favourite taste-makers. The only thing they're sorted for now are pensions and PEPs.



Jane MacQuitty

Don't be fooled: the label on the bottle may be amusing but the wine inside probably isn't

What's in a name? Not much, if this summer's crop of wines with silly names is any indication. I had thought I had seen it all a few summers back with the arrival of the appropriately titled Fat Bastard Chardonnay, an indifferent vin de pays d'Occ bottle whose dumb, flabby, clumsy character suited its name to a T.

The other new jokey bottle then was the skinny, acidic Cat's Pee on a Gooseberry Bush, a New Zealand white partly made from the sauvignon blanc grape. And this time with an overworked pun as a title, for the controversial sauvignon blanc grape is renowned for its gooseberry-green bouquet and taste.

Indeed, sauvignon blanc-haters enjoy comparing this distinctive grassy odour with landladies' stairs and cat's pee: hence the wine's name. Since then we have seen a rash of stupidly labelled wine bottles. So far the Thresher group, with three large outlets to look after — Wine Rack, Bottoms Up and Thresher — has fallen most heavily for this gimmickery. Of the dozen Thresher sells, the crown-capped Original Zin, an Italian primitive better known as California's zinfandel, and Original Sin, an Italian chardonnay, both priced at £4.99, are the most arresting, clad in bright blue bottles.

Thresher is also selling a sweet, frothy moscato frizzante in a blue bottle called, of course, Out Of The Blue. Coming next is In The Red, an Australian shiraz in a red bottle with a red cork.

The Victoria Wine Company is almost as bad. It continues to sell Fat Bastard Chardonnay and Cat's Pee on a Gooseberry Bush for an unjustified £5.99, alongside a charmless Aussie bruiser, Shirazamatazz (£5.99) and an aggressive, stinky Argentine red, Marge 'n' Tina Malbec Tempranillo (£4.49).

Today, wine merchant marketers have to work a lot harder for their crumb than they did when they hit on the relatively simple notion of putting the house nickname on the label, as Berry Bros & Rudd did with its Good Ordinary Claret, introduced in 1974.

This crass movement is a direct result of marketing folk wheeling into wine departments with briefcases full of research that declares wine should be made more user-friendly, less complicated and less highbrow. Hear, hear!

NEXT WEEK: 1997 Bordeaux

But using daftly named wine bottles is not the way to do it. In my tasting book any wine with a gimmicky name is priced at a pound more than it should be, to pay for the extra marketing costs, including the invention of the name, the daft, jokey labels and the bottles to match.

In addition, almost all of them deliver the most lacklustre wines.

There are a handful of exceptions to the dire-name, dire-wine syndrome. The most outstanding of these is Big Frank Chludinski's range of Languedoc wines. Frank Chludinski started with Big Frank's Red. This year's bottling is an equally delicious briary, berry fruit-laden 1996 blend of grenache, carignan and syrah on sale at Victoria Wine and Morrisons for £3.99.

His finest red of all is called Big Frank's Best Red and the 1995 vintage is made entirely from oak-aged shiraz and delivers rich liquorice and blackberry-thick fruit (Thresher group, £5.99). As memorable is Big Frank's dark, plummy vin doux naturel called Seriously Sticky. Victoria Wine still has 50cl bottles for £5.99.

The other notable exception is Randall Graham's Bloody Good White and Bloody Good Red, a blended California duo. Oddbins is selling the zesty, tropical fruit-stashed '97 Bloody Good White for £6.49, and a jolly good summer aperitif and accompaniment to spicy food it is, too. The new Bloody Good Pink is due in at the beginning of August. £5.49 at Oddbins; the Bloody Good Red arrives in the autumn.

The thing that separates Frank Chludinski's and Randall Graham's wines from the daftly named dross is that they are good winemakers with high standards. Of course, their own maverick approach has helped their sales figures, but this has been as much due to luck as marketing-speak.

Still, if you shudder at this new wine name directive, take heart. In beer-willing circles, things are much worse. Here, the likes of Old Part Beer and Dick Heads. Delightful as are the norms. Dear, oh dear, it's enough to drive you to drink. Take my advice, give any unknown wine bottle with a weird name a wide berth.

STAR BUYS

1996 Bacchus, Lamberhurst Vineyard, Majestic Wine £4.99; two for £3.99 each

This astonishingly good English wine made by Simon Day at Lamberhurst is the best new home-grown bottle for under a fiver I have tasted all year.

Bacchus is one of those intensely aromatic German

grape crosses, part silvaner, riesling and müller-thurgau. Together here they burst with thrilling, tongue-tingling grapefruit zest fruit, atop a lively, verdant palate that cries out for a lazy morning or afternoon in a deckchair.

BEST OF THE REST

From Monday until August 15, take your pick from Sateway's discounts on Australian wines: £1 off its lively 1997 Australian Cabernet Chardonnay; 80p off Hardy's peppery 1997 Grenache Stamp Shiraz Rosé; 70p off Penfolds' 1997 Rawsons Retrad Bin 21 white blend. All three are now £3.99. The best Aussie red is its own-label, 1997 Shiraz-Ruby Cabernet, down 50p to £3.49.

1996 Fetzer Home Ranch Zinfandel, California, Sateway, Oddbins, Majestic, Thresher group, Somerfield and Gateway, £5.99

With its bold berry fruit, Fetzer's zinfandel has been one of the best in the west for years. Though they have added the Home Ranch tag here, this

big, easy red, predominantly made with zinfandel grapes but with 5 per cent each of petite sirah and carignan, continues to deliver the kind of full, creamy style and 13.5 per cent alcohol that barbecue fans adore.

HENRY HARRIS'S CHEAT OF THE WEEK

EMPLOYING chefs from all over the world spoils me — they bring with them a wealth of new ideas. Those who live close to home tend to have the ideas that I favour most as they will be more in tune with the British seasons. There are certain things, however, which I hold in respect with — and at the top of my list is flavoured pestos.

I have yet to see the point of coriander pesto. Its bitter medicine-like flavours clash violently with other ingredients. I was discussing this recently with an Italian friend; he looked bemused as I ranted on about coriander pesto. He shut me up by saying that his mother makes pesto with broad beans. I had to

try it. Having made a batch, I spooned some over a steamed fillet of cod. My God, it was good. So here it is: it's perfect as a cheat as we can't buy big bunches of basil yet and the addition of broad beans stretches out the meagre packet of basil. The nuttiness of the broad beans also removes the need to use pine nuts.

500g fresh broad beans in the pod
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 packet of fresh basil, picked
2 tbsps parmesan
200ml extra virgin olive oil (approx)
Shell the broad beans and blanch them



Henry Harris is head chef at the Fifth Floor, Harvey Nichols, London.

THE DRINKS THAT TIME FORGOT

Snakebite

THE creators of many a cocktail are well-known to us: Giuseppe Cipriani, for example, who, in 1943, gave us the Bellini, or "Trader" Vic Bergeron, proud parent of the Dr Funk of Tahiti.

The birth-pangs of other concoctions, however, are rightly lost in the beery mists of bar-room braggadocio. I shudder to think what manner of man or beast first came up with the Snakebite, that unhappy, almost disturbing marriage of lager and cider.

Such partnerships among the closely related have unpredictable results, and a casual perusal of court reports in any rural paper will reveal the malignant presence of this lethal cocktail shortly before any outbreak of the proverbial "one-man crime wave".

For many years the crafty addition of a little blackcur-



Snakebite is a disturbing marriage of lager and cider

Such antics can still turn otherwise harmless mid festivals into Dodge City in less time than it would take Giuseppe's Venetian descendants to purée the peach juice. Each to his own.

Missing mum and her Ribena, youngsters would down this variation in volume before clambering on to tables to play invisible guitar to Thin Lizzy's *The Boys Are Back in Town*.

KATE STRONACH

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The Times Cook



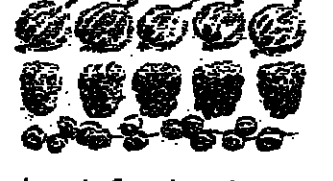
Frances Bissell

Pickles and preserves are great edible souvenirs of a Mediterranean holiday — or a traditional British summer

Rather than begrudge a few hours spent in the kitchen at this time of year, see it as an opportunity to build up a "savings account" for occasions in the future when you cannot afford the time to make these delicacies. Thus, boxes in the fridge, packs in the freezer, and jars and bottles on shelves can add a personal note to meals to come, and make delightful presents for other people.

For a more punchy, thicker style, blend the fruit and vinegar, then rub through a sieve to get rid of the seeds. Bottle or keep in a container in the refrigerator. Add herbs or spices and sugar if you like.

La salsa d'estate con nova
Makes about 3kg
500g each onions, carrots, celery and green beans
1kg red peppers
1tbsp salt
1tbsp sugar
200g extra virgin olive oil
1.5 litres white wine vinegar



each me the fig recipe. It is very unusual; you can smell, but not taste, a hint of the wine vinegar used. During my travels, if I have access to a kitchen, I find a morning's shopping in the market followed by an afternoon's gentle work in the kitchen results in delicious edible souvenirs to bring home. In Gozo, Malta, I might dry tomatoes or figs on the roof, pick capers to salt down, or in the spring make jars of lemon curd or marmalade. At the Lancelotti's, we make a big batch of grape preserve. Jars of fig jam come home with me from the Languedoc in late summer, and blueberry jam from America. But this is the peak of the English soft summer fruit season: raspberries, redcurrants and blackcurrants, gooseberries, together with all the hybrids such as tayberries, loganberries and cultivated blackberries. At this time of year I make a mixed summer berry jam, using

PREPARE the vegetables, peeling and topping and tailing as appropriate, and finely dice. Cook the hard vegetables for eight minutes with salt, sugar, oil and vinegar, and then add the peppers. Cook for a further seven minutes, 15 minutes in all. When cooked, leave to go cold, spoon into jars with liquid, and cover with 2cm olive oil. Seal and label. This will keep for a year.

The Lancelotti's serve this refreshing pickle with *bolito misto*, garnished with chopped, free-range, hard-boiled eggs. These next three spreads, or dips, are excellent with crudites. I also like to use them in the following very simple supper or lunch dish: Cut three long slices of bread, toast them, and spread each with one of the fillings. Cut into fingers, and arrange on a plate, soldier-style, with an egg — boiled, poached, or fried in olive oil.

Tomato and garlic spread
Serves 6-8
This is very easy to make, especially with a food processor or blender. It is, of course, a mixture

to experiment with, balancing flavours and textures as you prefer. Add more garlic if you think I have been too timid.

8-10 ripe tomatoes
3-4 garlic cloves, preferably new season's, peeled
About 200ml extra virgin olive oil
Salt
Pepper

PUT THE tomatoes and garlic in the processor and switch on. Pour in the olive oil gradually, as if you were making mayonnaise. Blend for about a minute, and scrape into a bowl or container. Add salt and pepper to taste, or

leave it to your guests to add at the table. You will see that the mixture has emulsified almost to a mayonnaise thickness. Spread on slices of bread or on toasted baguettes or day-old ciabatta. Let the mixture soak in a little before serving.

Olives and anchovy paste
Serves 4 to 6
200g ripe black olives, stoned
Flat can of anchovies in oil, drained
2tbsp capers, in brine, rinsed
Freshly ground black pepper
Peeled cloves of garlic, optional

keeps well and is worth making in larger quantities. Garlic is a good addition, but then the keeping quality is reduced, as uncooked garlic goes rancid within two or three days.

Roasted aubergine and onion spread
Serves 4 to 6
1 large aubergine
1 large mild Spanish onion
Extra virgin olive oil
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Lemon juice



oil and roast until they are tender. Remove the onion skin and process the onion and aubergine until smooth, gradually adding a little more olive oil. Season to taste, including the lemon juice.

Grape Jam (Gliko tou kontailiou)
Makes 2kg
1kg grapes
500g light muscovado sugar
1 vanilla pod
Juice of half a lemon

PEEL the grapes and remove the seeds. Put them in a bowl and cover with the sugar. Leave overnight. The next day, add the vanilla pod and boil for 20 minutes or so. Add the lemon juice and start testing for a set. Because the grapes must be peeled, it is best to use the largest ones; muscat grapes are good for this reason.

From Meni's recipe above, I have developed the following dark, fragrant preserve. Put in small jars for extremely luxurious presents, or serve for Sunday tea with freshly made scones.

Damask rose and black muscat grape jelly
Makes about 1 kg
1 or 2 large cooking apples
1 large bunch black muscat grapes
Sugar — see recipe
500ml or more dark red scented rose petals, measured in a jug
1tbsp rosewater — if necessary

WASH AND chop the apples, cores as well, and put in a saucepan. Add enough water to cover them by an inch or so. Cook until the apple is almost soft, then add the stemmed grapes and cook until they are soft. Mash the fruit to extract as much juice and pectin as possible. Strain through a jelly bag overnight.

Measure the volume of the liquid, and then measure out an equal volume of sugar. Pound half the rose petals in a small quantity of water and mix with the juice and the rest of the sugar. Put in a preserving pan or heavy saucepan. Keep the rest of the petals to add later. Heat the saucepan gently and cook until the sugar has dissolved. Add the remaining rose petals and bring the syrup to boiling point. Add the rose water if

THE PERFECT TOMATO SOUP

TOMATO soup is only worth making for the few weeks of summer when the sun has had a chance to give the fruit some flavour. Even then, tomatoes are so acid that you need to add other ingredients to temper this.

INGREDIENTS, for four people: olive oil, an onion, a carrot, a medium potato and one or two celery stalks, up to a kilo of ripe, sweet tomatoes, salt and pepper, a generous handful of lovage, or, failing that, some sprigs of basil or tarragon, and milk.

METHOD: peel and dice the vegetables (not the tomatoes) and fry them gently in a tablespoon or so of olive oil until the onion is translucent and golden, and the rest of the vegetables soft. Add two to three tablespoons of water if necessary to stop them burning. Add the tomatoes, roughly chopped, and simmer, covered, for 15 to 20 minutes. Season lightly and stir in the herbs. Add about 200ml milk and blend the soup until smooth. Sieve and return it to the saucepan. Reheat and add seasoning before serving.

VARIATION: instead of herbs, add cumin and cardamom, and replace the milk with coconut milk.

Next week: *The perfect zabaglione*

© Frances Bissell 1998
Next week: *An eminent Victorian*

She didn't have to sing for her supper but feeding a family of stars wasn't easy for Kim Wilde's mother, Joyce

Kim's early Wilde dining

Joyce Wilde left the all-singing, all-dancing Vernon Girls, who in the 1950s promoted the Vernon Pools, for the arms of Fifties rocker Marry Wilde. She married at 18, and by the time she was 21 she had an additional two mouths to feed with the birth of a daughter, Kim, and a son, Ricky. Both, with music in their blood, have famously followed in their parents' footsteps. Joyce found it hard work when she first had to cook for her husband and two children. "When I retired from dancing and got married I couldn't even boil an egg, let alone do anything else," she says. "I wasn't really up on anything and so it was mostly boil-in-the-bag stuff in those days."

regular basis. "I like to make a good old roast dinner, that's something that comes from my Mum and Dad, with a good drop of gravy. I appreciate that and I think that everyone else appreciates it," she says. Her gravy is a particular source of pride and, occasionally, conflict. "I'm meant to be the gravy maker in the whole family and if anybody makes better gravy I get really fed up," she says with a chuckle. "I don't like it one bit, and people do manage it sometimes." Joyce remains modest about her culinary abilities and insists that even after 39 years of marriage, she is no more than a competent cook who can do her roast dinners well, although when pushed she admits that she 'can cook a nice meal that will suit everyone'.



The Wildes always enjoy a Sunday roast but Kim, right, responded to fame by bingeing



Kim, had a much more serious problem with her diet at the height of her pop fame in the 1980s. "She went through a period with her career where she was under pressure and was binge-eating. It was big news at the time," Joyce recalls. "Things take their toll in this business."

These days Kim has left all that behind her. Married just under two years ago to actor Hal Fowler, who she met while he was co-starring with her in the West End musical *Tommy*, she now has a son, whose diet she is very particular about.

"Kim is very into gardening," explains her mother. "Everything she puts into my grandson's mouth is home-grown produce. She is very careful about what goes in everyone's mouth."

Ms Wilde's emphasis on healthy eating ties in nicely with the fitness video she is making. There is, she admits, a slight a chunk in the Wilde family's health armour. "I suppose like everyone we like to have a drink. I think that is everyone's downfall," she says. She could be speaking of her husband Marty, who was handed a 15-month road ban for drink-driving at the beginning of the year after being caught over the legal limit on a return journey from his local

pub at Christmas. At the moment, the ageing rocker has to cycle everywhere. "He cycles to the gym with an apple every day," says Joyce. Things weren't so healthy when he was on tour in the Fifties and Sixties. "I can't say we were as body conscious then," says Joyce. "You don't have as much choice when you are up and down the motorway, passing Little Chefs."

JOE WARWICK

MORE FOOD & DRINK IN the times magazine
Jean-Christophe Novelli creates canapés
Jonathan Meades goes Indian in Tooting

CONSUMING INTERESTS: FRESH SOUP

I HAVE been a keen customer for fresh soups since the New Covent Garden Soup Company launched them just ten years ago. Now the competition is very keen, but I still regularly buy the company's Smoked Haddock Chowder, Gazpacho, Tomato and Mascarpone, Lettuce and Green Pea and a handful of my other favourites. This tasting did not produce anything to displace my established favourites, but I hope everybody keeps trying. Ready-made fresh soup is a convenience food I really do appreciate.
ROBIN YOUNG

- Asda Asparagus Fresh Soup £1.19 for 450ml
Claims: "New. Delicious hot or cold. Approximately 43 per cent of calories from fat."
Verdict: Made with 21 per cent asparagus and commendably free of modified starch, sugar or gelling agent. I thought this a pleasing effort. Good enough to try again. ★★
- Marie-Amélie Soupe de Poissons à la Méditerranéenne £2.65 for 450g from Selfridges
Claims: "Soupe fraîche. Prête à l'emploi."
Verdict: Ideally the soup would have been accompanied by rouille and garlic croûtons. It included 40 per cent fish (conger,



- gurnard and pout) but no rascasse, the Mediterranean soup fish *par excellence*. Conger is strongly flavoured but was not a very pleasant substitute, and vegetable oil is no substitute for olive oil. ★
- Morrison's Carrot and Coriander Fresh Soup 99p for 500g
Claims: "Made with fresh carrots, cream and coriander."
Verdict: Though thickened with flour and modified starch, this cold-night soup had a carrot flavour and was palatable if unexciting. ★
- The Real Soup Company Watercress and Lettuce Fresh Soup £1.95 for 500g from Harvey Nichols
Claims: "We do not use any preservatives, colourings or other additives and all our soups are made with vegetable bouillon."
Verdict: I guess it was the natural yoghurt, onion and garlic in the mix which produced the dominating cheesy flavour. The soup does not have any cheese in it. ★
- Sainsbury's Fresh Soup Carrot & Coriander £1.09 for 500ml
Claims: "Better quality same price. Now with 25 per cent more coriander. 97 per cent fat free."
Verdict: Ingredients also include single cream, orange juice and modified corn starch. Lively, sweet and undeniably carrot, but not an especially summery recipe. ★★
- St Michael's Cucumber & Mint Fresh Soup £1.29 for 450g
Claims: "New. A smooth creamy soup made with cucumber and peas, garnished with fresh cucumber and mint. Serve hot or cold."
Verdict: The French translation of the ingredients list shows that 26 per cent is cucumber, 11 per cent peas, 6 per cent cream, and 0.09 per cent mint, but potatoes conspire with the peas to make it more floury and weighty than the title suggests. The flavour is a nice blend, the texture a bit crude. ★★

- Safeway Chicken, Wild Rice and Coriander Soup £1.59 for 500g
Claims: "New! A fresh chicken soup with vegetables, wild rice and seasoned with coriander. Contains less than 10 per cent meat."
Verdict: Carrot, onion, celery and potato were more obvious than wild rice, and this came close to being chicken soup for vegetarians. ★★
- Somerfield Country Vegetable Fresh Soup £1.05 for 450g
Claims: "Microwavable, suitable for home freezing."
Verdict: A smooth, unexciting but comforting blend of six vegetables with stock, cream and seasoning. ★★
- Tesco Fresh Soups Watercress £1.49 for 450g
Claims: "A rich summer soup, made with fresh watercress and double cream."
Verdict: The recipe included five extracts, and more onion than watercress, but the watercress flavour did survive. Not sufficiently impressive to buy again. ★

IN FRANCE, A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE
CANARD-DUCHÊNE
IS OPENED EVERY 10 SECONDS
BRUT
CHAMPAGNE SANS FORMALITE

Joanna Pitman



Alice stays at home while her parents dine at Spencer House; and Dr Thomas Stuttford responds to last week's column

Home from hospital with our first baby and helplessly alone. Giles and I spent all evening and most of the night reminding each other of the new family motto. Babies are parent proof. Clearly I had not had enough practice dressing dolls as a child. I struggled pathetically to get tiny Alice in and out of her nighties, wrestling gently with her legs, nudging and pulling them in and out of endless poppers, romperish items of clothing, not daring to exert any pressure in case she might break. Soon we discovered that we had laid in large quantities of the wrong-sized nappies. Toddler size for a 7lb girl gave Alice an impressively grown-up sort of bottom. In fact, we had laid in a lot of things that we didn't really know how to use. The bales of cotton wool and vats of Vaseline were welcome, but the top and tail bowl has yet to be christened. And as for the stocks of zinc and castor oil cream — we might as well set up a stall in Portobello Road and sell them off.

● WE QUICKLY realised that nappy size didn't really matter too much, as long as there was something in place to catch the quantities. Our first shock was the rainbow range of colours in which it appeared — from a sophisticated olive to a friendly yellow. Each time we spotted a change, we ran for our baby books, looked up poo in the index, and sank back, relieved that this range of pleasant heritage colours was indeed normal. ● ON THE evening of day two, the cavalry arrived in the form of Judith Glendinning, maternity nurse. A robust humour has enabled her to deal with recalcitrant babies and troublesome, ill-disciplined parents for 30 years now, and she had all three of us sorted out pretty quickly. We were shown how to bath and dress Alice, how to cuddle and wrap her in a swaddling sheet — this being vital for encouraging longer sleep patterns — and how to wind her. Naturally, the parents had to be trained too, and within 24 Giles had transformed himself into a Filipino maid.

Each morning I would watch in disbelief as he set off on autopilot to tackle his daily rounds of household duties: emptying the rubbish, shopping, cooking, washing, ironing, changing the water for the flowers — and even running to a spot of gardening. My duties were less onerous: a large amount of eating (4,000 calories a day for breast-feeding), plenty of regular rest and the occasional soak in a bath so dosed up with salt (to help heal my stitches) that I felt I was floating in the Dead Sea. ● AFTER a few days, the flowers became a problem. Every visitor turning up to pay homage to Alice arrived clutching a bunch. And Wild At Heart, the local florist, was

doing a brisk trade in telephone orders, Gus being dispatched on his bike with another bunch most afternoons. With a total of five vases in the house, we had to stick them in jugs, mugs, buckets and basins — anything that would hold water. Beg, borrow or steal a vase became our second family motto. ● JUDITH leaves tonight, so yesterday we slipped in our first outing, babyless. When you have had a new baby, all your friends assume you are permanently shattered and they don't dare suggest supper. So with no kitchen pasta on offer we braved a grand dinner at Spencer House. With a brain like a marshmallow, and having barely caught up

with the results of the World Cup, I had a little trouble gearing up to discuss the latest Heritage Lottery fund controversies and the pitched battles going on between the trustees of Somerset House and the Inland Revenue over the fraught tenancy of Somerset House. When Michael Heseltine began a long speech about his era as deputy prime minister and the size of his office, I admit I switched off. The mind began to wander from the Gainsboroughs to the after-dinner chocolates to whether Alice might still be asleep. Bad move. As soon as the mother as much thinks about her breast-fed baby, the breasts begin to swell in anticipation of a feed. By the time Michael Heseltine had finished speaking, mine were

the size of barrage balloons. Luckily we reached home before they burst.

● ALICE went to her first party a couple of weeks ago, on a Sunday afternoon at the age of two weeks. The venue was Todd and Tim's huge 17th-century villa down the Mile End Road, a house in a state of serious disrepair but fortunately, given the rain, with a new roof courtesy of the Spitalfields Trust. We picked our way through the mud around the building site. Alice unaware of her down-at-heel surroundings, being fast asleep in a sling. It was an open-house sort of party for architects, historians, architectural historians, gardening experts, writers and one or two mere mothers. All took their children, who ran wild as the rest of us sipped at our wine, admiring the fine panelling and plasterwork and inspecting the owners' collection of stuffed crocodiles and stuffed swans and other unusual artistic miscellanea in marble, bronze and mahogany. We're beginning to get an idea of the range of parental duties awaiting us: several were overheard indulging in light competitive tendering on marriage matches for their children. One tiny lady of three months has been fixed up with a small grandson of George Soros. Alice has yet to find her match.

A DOCTOR REPLIES

IT'S GOOD to hear that Alice, Joanna Pitman's baby daughter, is flourishing. This is to be expected. The overwhelming majority of babies born as a result of a precipitate delivery do as well as babies born in the best hospital. But the fraction who don't thrive is greater in those delivered after a precipitate labour than for those who have a standard delivery. Joanna Pitman's friends, her corner newsgang and the health professionals from whom she takes her advice, underestimate this risk. American obstetricians like risk factors tabulated and have charted the relative risks of abnormal pregnancy and delivery. Precipitate delivery comes half way down the list, exactly equal with such factors as a mother being grossly anaemic or having a small pelvis, diet-controlled diabetes, having had a previous caesarean, a long labour of more than 20 hours, a breach, or an operative forceps delivery. None of these is a very alarming feature of a pregnancy or labour, but they are not to be treated lightly. DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

Girls join boys behaving badly

Drinking and fighting is no longer exclusively a male preserve.

Sharon Maxwell Magnus reports on a worrying trend

Everywhere you look these days you see girl power. There has never been a better time to be a teenage girl. They are confident, assertive and optimistic. They are doing better than boys at school. And, if a new prediction from the trend-spotting Henley Centre is correct, they are growing up to become "millennial" women who will burst through the glass ceiling to snatch the top jobs from men. As a mother of two daughters, I find this encouraging, but there is a darker side to girl power. As girls seize the initiative from boys, they are also increasingly apeing traditional masculine behaviour, such as bunking off school, getting drunk and fighting. On Tuesday, at the Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group conference, researcher Antoinette Hardy will present a pioneering paper on female violence which, she reckons, reflects girls' readiness to emulate male behaviour. For example, Ms Hardy explains, girl-fights nowadays are not hair-pulling and scratching rituals: most involve punching and head-butting, and some girls use weapons. "Many girls do not feel their femininity is compromised by adopting traits traditionally perceived as masculine," Ms Hardy says. "In many cases, if being assertive falls they are willing to resort to violence to protect their image." And the tough-girl image means drinking and smoking more too. A new report by the Schools Health Education Unit found that one in ten 16-year-old girls regularly drinks over the safe limit: the same percentage as boys —



Anna Vincent has her eye on a future in a rock band

and rising. Teenage girls already account for the bulk of young smokers. Gordon McVie, director of the Cancer Research Campaign, has no doubt that smoking attracts adolescent girls partly because they feel it helps them keep slim, but also because "it's part of this new laddishness. It's seen as cool, different." Wasted Youth, a survey published this week by the Institute for Public Policy Research, points out the girls are now just as likely as boys to play truant, under-achieve at school and then drop out of the education system. However, crime is the starkest example of girl power gone off the rails. Violent offences by adolescent girls have quadrupled in the past 15 years — while the number of violent offences by boys has dropped. Most notorious of all are the headline-hitting "girl gangs", such as the Canada Square Gang in Corby, Northants,

some of whom were convicted for the manslaughter of 13-year-old Louise Allen. And the chilling trio of Tynesiders — Sonya Ryan, 22; Janice Fleck, 18 and a 16-year-old who cannot be named for legal reasons — who have more than 200 convictions between them. Dr Ann Hagell, co-director of the Policy Studies Bureau, points out that 40 years ago boys committed 11 crimes for every one committed by girls, and now the ratio is three to one. Paradoxically, says Dr Hagell, "girls now tend to be treated less harshly than their male counterparts. It used to be the other way round." Indeed, Sonya Ryan actually rang a newspaper to complain that while it frequently featured male crime sprees, it ignored her and her friends, who were just as bad. The new aggressiveness of girl gangs may be largely confined to deprived areas, but middle-class parents are having to deal with the new freedoms demanded by assertive, confident daughters. Stefanie Pruski, 17, is proud of the fact that she can drink male friends under the table. Nicknamed "Graham" by her contemporaries, she confesses to loathing "girly things. I like to go down the pub and watch football. I'm loud, I shout when I'm angry and I like to chant — which is why I'm seen as a bit of a bloke." "There's definitely a feeling that girls have been responsible for so long that now it's payback time," says Anna Vincent, 16, who plays in a heavy metal band and wants to make it in the music industry. Zoe Patel, 15, is also adamant that girls can behave exactly like boys. "Of course girls go down the pub, drink beer, get drunk. To say that's a boy's thing is like saying that boys should wear blue and girls should wear pink." For these young women, having a relationship with a boy comes a long way down their list of priorities. Many girls prefer to go out in a gaggle. "I was in a relationship for three months and it was, like, boring. I prefer to go out with my girlfriends and have a laugh," says Zoe. "My mum doesn't mind because she knows what it is like not to have your freedom." This new-found freedom does have one grave implication for men. None of the girls I spoke to saw having a partner or family as a major ambition. Indeed, Stefanie was horrified when one friend confessed to wanting to become a wife and mother. After all, who needs blokes if you can be one yourself?



Sonya Ryan (left), takes pride in the crimes committed by her fellow members of in their Tyneside girl gang

Invasion of the Beanie Babies

The Beanie Baby craze just grows and grows. Every toy seems to want one — or more — of these scraps of stuffed plush with a cute expression and name tag. Beanie Babies are a clever marketing initiative. Parents welcome them as a return to innocence — to the days when little ones played with bears and doll's houses, rather than plastic food and computer games. Children, especially girls, are attracted by the beanie's foundling-like qualities: they come with date of birth and character poem. Most of all, they like beanie because there are more than 200 of them, and it is well known to toy makers that children are obsessive collectors. And that is the problem. You can almost forgive the unimaginative names such as Puffer the penguin, Snee the stegosaur and Splash the whale. You might turn a blind eye to poor Chugs the lamb or Gobbles the turkey. No, the point is, your children are not happy with just one of these beanbags with faces, they want a beanie. And since they cost between

Jane Wilson on the toy every child wants



E4 and E6, they are hardly pocket-money toys. On top of that, rarity value is built in to the marketing concept. There are children who will tell you with awe and insistence that you really should buy them Princess the bear or Magie the dragon because they might be worth thousands of pounds sometime in the next century. Britannia the British bear — not available in America — recently sold at a Malvern toy fair for £250. Children have cottoned on fast to the idea that so long as they don't

detach the heart-shaped label that bears the Ty heart symbol, their cuddly creatures could be a downpayment on a mortgage. Invented by Ty Warner, the founder of Ty Europe and "a reserved sort of chap", the Beanie Babies are not intended to turn children into investment-conscious boarders, according to finance director Paul Read. But he may be suffering from naivety. As the Cabbage Patch dolls and Tama-gotchi crazes have shown, scarcity is a potent market force. In order to keep Beanie's ticking over, Ty reaches out intermittently from Chicago and extinguishes a few at random. Bye-bye Ally the alligator, Flumer the butterfly and, by now, about 50 others. And new ones are sent scuzzing, waddling and flapping on to shop shelves. Rebecca Bridle, 11, has been telling her friends for some time now what a good investment Beanie's are. Rebecca, her sister Sarah and four-year-old brother Nicholas share a portfolio of 70. When they visit their Beanie shop in Bicester



Nicholas, Rebecca and Sarah Bridle proudly display their expanding Beanie empire

they are reassured by seeing Magic on sale at £45 and Speedy the turtle at £40, even though their mother, Elizabeth, tells them that Beanie's are just toys. "My children think they're going to put themselves through university on Beanie's," says another mother. "We have alternative plans." Ty even has its own Web site (<http://www.ty.com>) designed for children, featuring goopy colours and a daily Beanie diary. There is an accessories industry; and in America, but

heading for the UK, are books with titles such as Beanie Baby Handbook and Rosie's Price, which (wildly) guess at future values. Might Beanie's make you a fortune? Hugo Marsh of the auctioneers Christie's, which specialises in collectibles at its South Kensington branch, is unconvinced. "Demand is guided by natural wastage, not by popular fads, hype and media exaggeration," he says. So, just tell your little ones that these toys are lovable.

● Beanie Fair, Maidenhead Leisure Complex, August 2, 10am-4pm



Baby snatchers

SAVOUR THIS snippet from a recent New York Post: "A Brooklyn man was arraigned yesterday on charges that he used the Internet to bamboozle Beanie Baby collectors out of their precious stuffed animals. He made deals in chat rooms to swap the stuffed animals with other collectors from around the country, but when he got their dolls he didn't send any in return." Or this from The New York Times: "Police have charged two boys, eight and ten, with burglary in the theft of 13 Beanie Babies, the value of the stolen items being estimated at \$300. They were released into the custody of their parents and are scheduled to appear shortly in juvenile court." There are other cases of Beanie Baby crime: the woman whose car was broken into because she left a rare doll on her dashboard. Or the stationery shop owner who was charged



with importing 6,500 counterfeit Beanie Babies from China and conspiring to sell them for \$1,500 each. As Ty, the company which makes the dolls, "retires" Beanie Babies from time to time, the price of the dolls which will no longer be made shoots through the roof. According to www.beaniebaby.com, a Web site that follows the Beanie Baby world, Peanut the elephant is now worth \$4,800. Brownie the brown bear sells for \$4,300 and Derby the horse fetches \$4,000. According to Forbes magazine, \$250 million worth of Beanie Babies were sold in America last year. This year's sales promise to be ten times greater.

TUNKU VARADARAJAN

سكذامن الاصل

A daisy chain reaction



Mary Quant in her "sulking seat". Gardens, she says, switch off everything else in her life. "That's what they're all about. I have been known to garden in the middle of the night"

Mary Quant's directions to her garden in the Home Counties conclude with the words: "There may be diversion signs. Pay no attention." It is a sentiment consistent with her unswerving style which set the Sixties swinging and helps keep Britannia cool: her iconoclastic daisy symbol still conveys the chic it did 30 years ago.

Ms Quant's appearance, too, is steadfast: black trousers with a chain draped across the front, a black-and-white striped shirt and her trademark Cleopatra haircut and pale pink lipstick. But the bold simplicity associated with the Mary Quant name and label is not evident in her voluptuous garden. Climbers almost overwhelm the 1920s house built by the great-aunt of her late husband, Alexander Plunket-Greene as a picnic folly. It stands at the end of an unassuming wooded drive on a hill-side overlooking fields and woodland.

"Diana Cooper and many of the Bloomsbury set used to come here. They were very keen on making baskets and cheeses. I am keeping up the tradition, at least of the bohemian house party," says Ms Quant. The skeleton of the 1920s design remains, but Mary Quant and her late husband made the garden what it is today. It is clear she is a hands-on gardener — she has been without help in the garden for a year — but she is oddly reluctant to talk much about the practical side.

"I love to make a garden look as if it has just happened, as if wild and cultivated plants have mixed naturally. It is important to get the greens right and the structure. The nicest job of all is going round with a glass of white wine deciding what to do next," she says.

Wisteria, honeysuckle, hops and clematis have completely obscured some of the windows, and the shape and form of the house have been lost to Ms Quant's triffid-like planting.

"The garden is over the top. It is my refuge. These huge limes are my favourite trees and I planted the whitebeam. I had the hedges layered and these bluebells along the edge of the hedge are perfect — all mid-blue flowers excite me. I can't really

The woman who stamped a flower on the Sixties is, unsurprisingly, a passionate gardener. Jane Owen meets Mary Quant

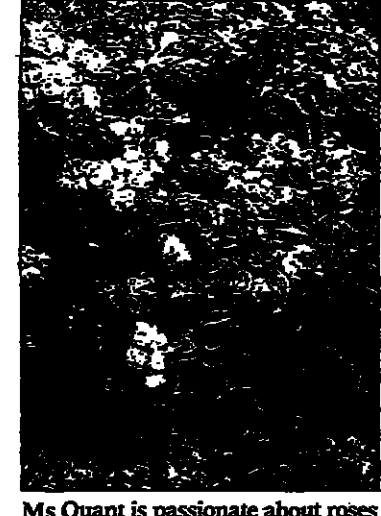
ME AND MY GARDEN: MARY QUANT

believe the colour is possible. I love mauve sweet peas and the hollyhock 'Nigra' with its burgundy-black flower. I collect the seeds of both."

Roses are another of Ms Quant's favourites and she delights in the climbers that twirl about her plot. "I love the scented pink centifolia, 'Fantin-Latour' for its mad flamboyance, 'Cécile Brunner' which arranges itself in swags, 'Boule de Neige' which is white and globular and deliciously smelly, and 'Chapeau de Napoleon' which bursts deep pink through its green calyx like a tomato."

As she talks she pushes through sopping tendrils and branches around the terrace to a bosky area where hawthorn, philadelphus, camellia and azaleas make a dense canopy of dripping green. The path is narrow and overhung until, suddenly, we are in a small clearing open on one side, with a white-painted bench on the other.

Back in front of the house, below the terrace, is a blousey planting of pinks and whites with roses, arum lilies, poppies, a fig, azaleas, and a brick niche with a bench in it.



Ms Quant is passionate about roses

"A sulking seat," says Ms Quant who smiles constantly and must be too busy to sulk, on top of running Quant, the business, she is a non-executive director of House of Fraser. At 64-years old, she has a passion for what she does. "I still enjoy the work.

The excitement and the development and the evolution of the whole thing. "It is like a garden. You put seeds in at one end of the year and see the result at the other end of the year. Just like my business."

Pushing through the undergrowth brings us to a Gothic-style door in an aged-looking wall. The door is from a church, the wall was built from old bricks by the Plunket-Greens. This is the fruit and vegetable garden with a swimming pool and summer house at the far end. A netted area encloses soft fruit, there are Cox's apples and pears and herbs, horseradish and a large area of Scottish fir apple potato, and an even larger area of roses.

"I think I've got all the French 'Madames' here," she says. "And Vita Sackville-West's green rose. And *Rosa mundi*. I can never get enough of roses."

Roses are all very well but they are one of the main causes of post-June tristesse in English gardens as the great fanfare of scent and colour declines. Ms Quant has overcome the problem, and the inspiration came from working in Japan.



The garden is full of "surprises and intrigues": a secluded dining spot (left) and the box roundel (right)



The garden is full of "surprises and intrigues": a secluded dining spot (left) and the box roundel (right)

A lack of urban greenery has led a record company to set up a competition to grow the tallest sunflower

Grow a whopper in the inner city

DESPITE the lacklustre summer, there is a promise of brightness in south London, thanks to Seb Davey and Dylan Barnes, two record company owners.

Mr Davey, 29, and Mr Barnes, 28, who co-run Sunflower Records, an independent record label based in Brixton, are launching the Great

Giant Sunflower Competition. Using the slogans: "Sow Your Seeds" and "Size Does Matter", the two keen gardeners have challenged the residents of south London to compete for hundreds of free records by growing the tallest sunflower.

They were inspired to set up the competition by the lack of

public spaces, such as roundabouts or roadside verges, which, months later, produced colourful results.

Another inspiration for the competition came from a family friend, the author and 1993 Garden Writer of the Year, Joy Larkcom. "Joy put us in touch with a few different seed companies and when we approached Unwins it immediately said: 'Just don't go anywhere else — we'll do it!'" Mr Davey says.

As part of the competition there is a special prize for the best creative use of a sunflower. The winner will receive a signed copy of Joy Larkcom's book *Creative Vegetable Gardening*. The author favours growing peas around the stem of the sunflower.

flowering sunflower by September, when Mr Davey and Mr Barnes will visit the 20 tallest entries and judge the winners.

The winner will receive 100 free records, CDs or tapes from IS Records; second prize is a £50 Unwins seed voucher. Runners-up will get T-shirts and copies of Sunflower Records' latest releases.

To enter, send a postcard before the closing date of September 10, with your name, age, address, telephone number and the height of your sunflower or details of your sunflower arrangement to: Sunflower Records Giant Sunflower Competition, PO Box 9956, London SE1 1ZE.



ADAM BARKER Dylan Barnes, left, and Seb Davey of Sunflower Records

STEPHEN ANDERTON'S GARDEN ANSWERS

Q This spring, my 15-year-old willow started to come into leaf but after a few days died. There is still no sign of recovery. Any ideas as to why this might occur? — D. F. Blair, Warminster, Wiltshire.

A It often happens that a tree which has been dying slowly over a number of years will, in its last spring, throw a flurry of new leaves which come to nothing. It is just the spring warmth pushing out the last of the sap and sugars. (Even severed willow logs one foot across can continue to throw shoots for a few months.) But the tree is already dead. So look for a cause of death, including root rot and honey fungus. Late frost might cut back the new foliage of a willow, but it would have to be an unbelievably severe frost to cut a willow to the ground.



Q I have recently purchased an evergreen shrub *Feijoa sellowiana*, but I know very little about its likes and dislikes. The nursery had no details in its various reference books. Can you help? — W. Farrell, Bendley, Wores.

A Maybe the problem is that now feijoa is more correctly listed as *Acca sellowiana*? It is in the myrtle family and you will need to plant it on a very sheltered sunny wall. A conservatory might be better so far inland. There it can pretend it is at home in Uruguay or Brazil. Acid or lime soil will do. When it is happy, the shrub can reach 15ft each way in old age, but a tub will house it well enough in a British conservatory. The flowers are pale stars, full of scarlet stamens tipped with yellow pollen. The fruits, "pineapple guavas", may follow in a warm year.

Q I have always liked the open habit and upward-curving branches of one of my young cypresses. Perhaps it is *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Wisselii'. But it is too close to the path and I wish to prune it rather than move it. Would this be satisfactory? — D. Thorley, Manchester.

A You could certainly prune it back a little. Go all round the tree, taking 6in off the leading side branches. Do not cut the leader, and do not cut back as far as old bare wood which will not sprout. You should then be rewarded by the side branches filling out. The tree will thicken and gradually lose its open habit, but that is the price of it not having space to spread out fully.

As new upper branches develop from the rising trunk, you will need to shorten them back. It is really like treating the tree as a piece of conical topiary. Bear in mind when pruning that with all conifers, whether they have needles or flattened cypress-like foliage, regular nipping and trimming produces kinder results than periodic heavy chopping. Little and often is the rule. And never take out the leader unless you absolutely have to.

Write to Garden Answers, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9DN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. Enclosures cannot be returned.

Get yourself connected

The Web is a great place to meet gardeners, says Anne Wareham



Gardeners worldwide can swap tips on the Internet

- GARDEN WEBSITES**
- British Gardening on Line — <http://www.oxalis.co.uk>
 - Hardy Plant Society — <http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk>
 - Royal Horticultural Society — <http://www.rhs.org.uk>
 - I Garden — <http://www.igarden.co.uk>
 - Internet Garden — <http://www.internetgarden.co.uk>
 - Rare Plants — <http://rareplants.co.uk>

Like a vastly overgrown old garden, the Internet has an enormous amount to offer gardeners but finding it can take some patient exploring. And during your explorations it is easy to be led astray by tempting vistas that lead nowhere.

The websites listed here would make good starting points for your explorations. Apart from the information they contain, they also offer "links" to related or more specialised websites. Following these links can prove instructive as you find yourself discovering sites and information which you had not even thought of.

In British Gardening on Line, for example, there is a guide to gardens in the British Isles. You can read about the individual gardens, and, should you wish to know more, some gardens will have a link which will take you to that garden's "site". (That in turn may have links. If you have a special interest, say a particular plant genus, there may be a link to a specialist society's website.)

The Internet also is a good starting point for finding out about gardening societies — the Hardy Plant Society and the RHS both have sites.

You can read the gardening sections of some of the quality newspapers. You can visit nurseries. Rare Plants has a site which includes plant descriptions and a feature called "interesting" which reviews sites they have visited.

And you can talk to other gardeners. This happens two ways — some sites have a place where people put in queries by e-mail. Or you can "talk" in real time — AOL's Greenfingers site offers a "chat" session between 5pm and 9pm on Wednesdays. How else could you contact hundreds of other gardeners from all over the world?

Beware: felling may break a preservation order, says Barbara Abbs

Spare that tree, or face a day in court

In order not to break the law, I have just had to scramble painfully through a large *Berberis julianae*, which has spines more than an inch long, to dig out a sycamore tree that had become noticeable between the shrub and the house wall. The area I live in has recently become a conservation area. Suddenly, every sapling with a stem greater than 7.5cm in diameter at a distance of 1.5 metres from the ground has become the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). That's about the diameter of a jam jar. A couple of years of inaction and that sycamore would have been too big to remove or even prune without permission from my local authority.

The legislation concerning TPOs is heavy stuff, literally and metaphorically. There is a thick book of guidance for authorities containing details of any number of Acts and Statutory Instruments, yet apart from the birth of a sapling, all the legislation seems short on specifics.

The Local Planning Authority can make a TPO if it is "expedient in the interest of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area". The Act does not define "amenity" and each authority is "advised to develop ways of 'assessing amenity' objectively and consistently".

Because of this, there are variations across the country. One authority will be very literal about only placing preservation orders on trees that are visible from a public place; others may put TPOs on shrubs, hedgerows or even climbers if they think it is in the public interest. Fruit trees are supposedly exempt from legislation, but may not be if they are mulberries,

medlars or walnuts. But the legislation is a double-edged sword, in that anyone can ask for a preservation order to be placed on any tree they like.

A neighbour may not want an enormous beech tree in his garden, but he just loves the one in yours. The speed and secrecy with which an order can be placed is vital when local residents are trying to prevent unscrupulous developers destroying trees that get in their way but can ruin neighbourly relations.

Photographer Sunniva Harie moved from a townhouse into the country especially to make a garden. Her new plot, overlooking flat, willow-edged fields in East Sussex, had yet another willow tree in the middle of it. The solicitor's searches had not revealed any TPOs and it was not a conservation area. She told her neighbours, as a matter of courtesy, that she was planning to redesign the garden and would need to remove the willow.

Before she had finished unpacking, they had written to her local authority. An officer looked at the tree from the neighbours' garden and a provisional preservation order was placed on it.

Six weeks must elapse between



'She could not tidy up the fallen branch without permission'

the application for a provisional order and its confirmation. This gives everyone the opportunity to have their say and for advertisements to appear in the local press to alert the public that tree works are being considered. If, as a result, there are sufficient objections, then the application for felling or tree works will go to the planning committee. In the meantime, no one can do anything.

There are appeal procedures. You can first go to the Department of the Environment and, if you are still not satisfied, make the appeal to the High Court.

Daniel Wynne, the tree and landscape officer of Lewes District Council, says that he has rarely placed a TPO on a tree without the owner objecting. Usually though, after he has explained the possibility — Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to preserve the treescape for the benefit of all of us — the owner accepts the position.

In gardens, things are not always as straightforward as the preservation of street trees. June Streets, who lives in a conservation area in Hove, Sussex, wanted to cut down a silver birch that was spoiling the shape of a nearby tulip tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*. The birch was larger, visible from the surrounding area and therefore a "visual amenity". It had to stay, and the posher but smaller tulip tree continues to grow askew.

Robin Loder, the owner of the

glorious garden at Leonardstee in Sussex, says his garden was saved by the hurricane of 1987. He would, he said, never have got permission to fell the number of trees that needed to be taken down.

Over the years the trees had grown so large that they had overshadowed the collection of rhododendrons and azaleas, reducing their flowering. As the blossoms were the principal attraction, the garden was slowly declining. They lost several thousand trees on the night of October 17, 1987, and the garden is again a paradise of colour and scent.

A stormy night was also a piece of luck for Ms Harie. A large branch crashed down from the willow, narrowly missing a garden building. The tree had not been inspected when the provisional order was placed on it, and it was discovered to be diseased. Even so, she could not touch the tree or tidy up the fallen branch without permission. The TPO was not confirmed and eventually Ms Harie was allowed to have it cut down, after considerable expense.

Planting the wrong sort of tree is all too easy. It may look sweet and kittenish when small, but in years to come you may have to look on helplessly as it grows and grows. There are appropriate trees for almost every site — even the maligned Leyland cypress has been found to be wonderful for absorbing pollution on motorway verges — but forest trees such as ash, oak, lime, beech and sycamore will always grow too large for gardens in residential areas. Think instead about native hawthorns, crab apples, the smaller birches, rowans and willows and check the ultimate height and spread and the density of the leaf canopy.

Above all, when you next travel through the countryside and admire a 200-year-old oak in a hedge-row, or a spreading chestnut tree on a village green, remember that it is probably still there only because it has a TPO on it.

If such aesthetic considerations fail to console, it has been found that trees can add about 10 to 15 per cent to the value of a property. Living in a conservation area counts for even more.



While preservation orders can bring problems for the owners, they do ensure the prosperity of fine trees

■ Divide clumps of autumn-flowering colchicum bulbs now, before autumn rains induce fresh root growth and flowers. Single small bulbs planted in grass or borders will soon build up again into strong clumps.

■ Cuttings of pinks may be taken now, using strong 3in terminal shoots set 1in deep around a pot of open compost, composed of 50 per cent sand or vermiculite, and 50 per cent peat or substitute. Even neat sand will do.



■ Regal pelargoniums at the end of their flowering period may be rested for a few weeks with little water, before starting them into growth again.

■ After flowering, prune out 50 per cent of the flowered shoots and any crossing branches on philadelphus and deutzia, to allow sun into the bush to ripen flowering growth for next year. Older stems may be cut out near to the ground to ensure new wood is regularly produced from the base.

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Plants get collective security

Rare genera are being saved from extinction by a dedicated group of amateurs, reports Barbara Abbs

What do *Barkeria* and *Gasteria* have in common? They are genera found in the National Collections of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens. Every plant in each genus is an object of desire to the enthusiasts who collect them. Dedicated collectors such as this used to be seen as unusual, even slightly obsessive.

But since the formation of the NCCPG 20 years ago, their place in horticulture and the botany is becoming both recognised and necessary. Ecologists are grateful too, because many of the plants found in our gardens are foreigners, in danger of disappearing from their native habitats.

The NCCPG was set up in 1978 when Chris Brickell, the then director of the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Wisley, called a meeting of people concerned about the number of garden plants that had apparently disappeared from cultivation.

By the time the first national newsletter appeared in 1982, county groups were firmly established in Cornwall and Wiltshire, a further 11 had had public launches and another 11 were on the way.

As well as administering the collections, the group produces a supplement to the list of rare and endangered plants. The second list of plants was issued in 1981.

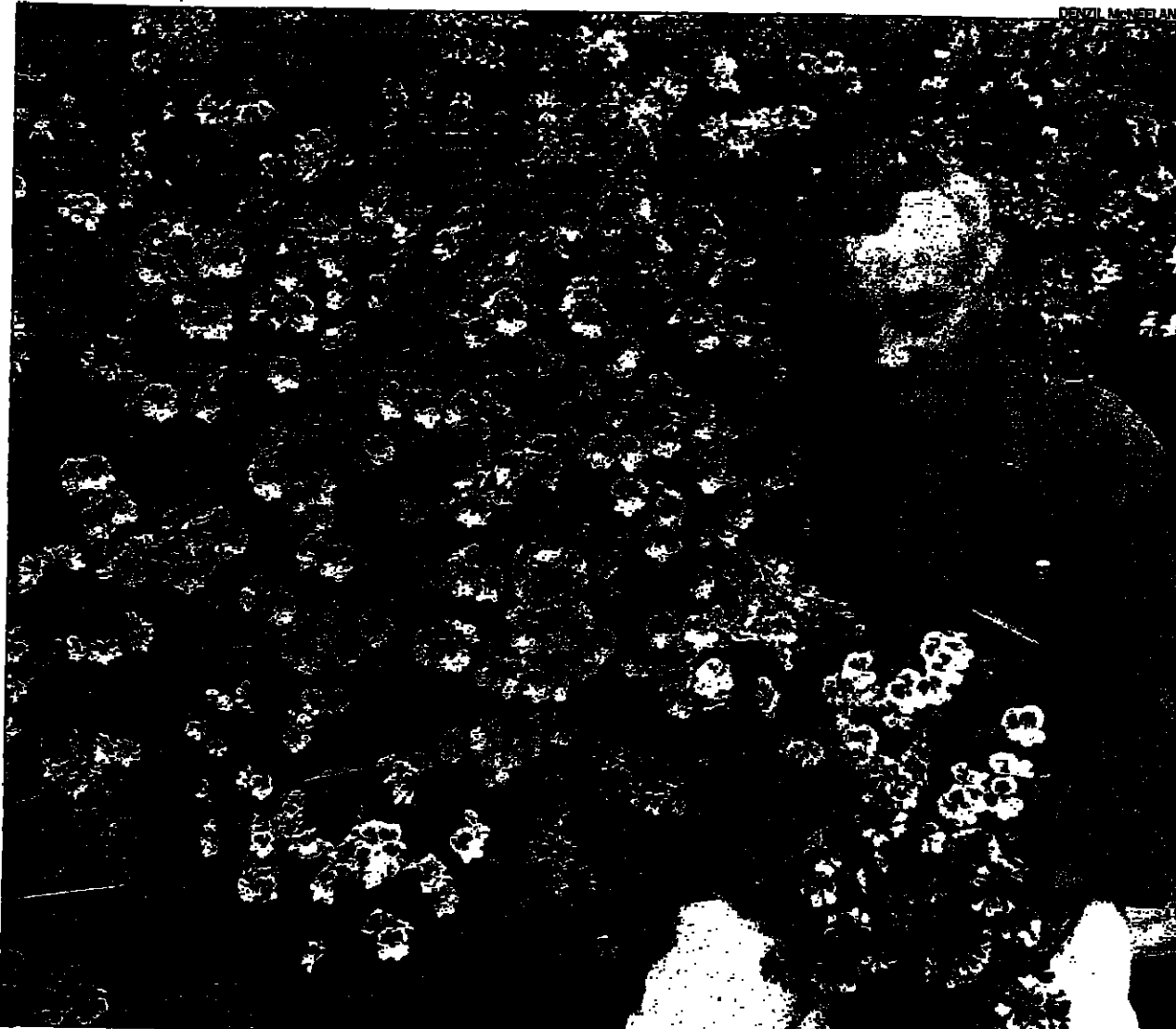
Although the first four plants on the list are still lost, there are several notable triumphs. *Anemopsis macrophylla*, the false anemone with purple blue flowers, is today available from 18 nurseries; the beautiful *Arisaema candidissimum*, with pink and white striped spathes, at 22 nurseries, and *Buxus sempervirens var suffruticosa*, the dwarf edging box, at 31 nurseries.

But even after 20 years of NCCPG activity, plants are still disappearing from commerce as they are from the wild. Each year *The Planifinder* lists an increasing number which are available from nurseries but the number of deletions rises each year as well. It is here that the National Collections come in. Any of the deleted plants, if they are from some of 581 genera that are collected by amateurs, through study and research, have acquired an expertise second to none in their respective genera.

As Graham Patison, the plant conservation officer of the NCCPG, says: "It must be recognised that many of the amateurs, through study and research, have acquired an expertise second to none in their respective genera."

The NCCPG has not only generated groups in this country but abroad too. There are similar initiatives in Australia, France, America and Poland, with green shoots in Belgium, Germany, Sweden and New Zealand.

There are many links between collection holders here and enthusiasts in other countries. Ghent azaleas are still grown in the UK but were neglected in their own country. Now a movement by



Derek Lloyd Dean with his National Collection of angel pelargoniums, which he exhibited at Hampton Court last week

dedicated growers from Ghent is building a collection which will be held at Belgium's Parc Beerveide, where Count Renaud de Kerchove de Dentereghem and his wife, Christine, stage their country's largest plant fairs twice a year.

First, Archie Skinner and now Nigel Davies, managers at the National Trust, Sheffield Park Garden, where the UK National Collection is held, are working with the Belgians to return cultivars to Beerveide and to search British gardens for the varieties that dedicated researcher Albert de Raedt has found documented in Belgian horticultural literature.

National Collection holders are as varied as the plants they cultivate. Derek Lloyd Dean, whose collection of angel pelargoniums were on show in the Heritage Marquee at Hampton Court last week, was a microbiologist before he

bought a driving school in Harrow to give him more time and flexibility to exhibit and lecture about his plants.

"The collection fits comfortably into his back garden. Small compact plants, they come in a variety of soft pinks, corals and mauves. With dead-heading they last all summer in pots and tubs. It is easy to see why anyone could fall in love with them."

Diascias are South African members of the same family as foxgloves and antirrhinums. So Northumberland may seem an unlikely home for these sun lovers, but that is where Christine Boulby cultivates her collection.

Further south, near York, her brother William has an identical collection with 22 species. Ms Boulby says: "I love the plant and care that it is kept for posterity."

Most NCCPG members are not specialists. Local groups are friendly organisations that run plant sales, have propaga-

Weird but wonderful

GARDENS TO VISIT

■ Dorset Gardens Trust Garden Day
Melpash Court, on A3066 between Bridport and Beaminster, 10.30am-5pm. £3. For further information call 01935 891324.
THE garden was laid out by Lady Diana Tinkles with a stream, bog garden, Japanese area, herbaceous borders, croquet lawn lake and formal kitchen garden.
But there is much more packed in today. You can enjoy lectures by Penelope Hobhouse, Patrick Taylor and a wide selection of specialist nurseries from Abbotsbury Sub-tropical Gardens to Avon Bulbs, and from the box specialist Bellamont Botanical to herbs from Lower Severalls Herb Nursery.

■ The Chaumont Garden Festival
Ferme du Château, 41150 Chaumont sur Loire, France. 17km from Blois, 185km from Paris, exit A10 at Blois or Amboise. 9am to sunset every day until October 18. Fr45, which includes guided tour in English (033 254 209922). THE 30 show gardens here are far more innovative

than anything you will have seen at Chelsea, and far more international. Some of the gardens are barmy — last year there was a display of rising and falling psychedelic phallic symbols — but the majority of the displays are brilliant, with water gardens, floating vegetable gardens, pebble gardens, and a soft greenhouse.
This year there are horror days for the children (September 5-6), when monstrous plants and scarecrows go on display.

■ Aberley Gardens
Worcestershire 12m northwest of Worcester, on A443, today and tomorrow 11.30am-5pm. £2 for entrance to 13 gardens open for the National Gardens Scheme (01562 850238).
THE village is set in a beautiful area and among the gardens is a two-and-a-half-acre hillside with herbaceous beds, a scented garden around an old farmhouse and a five-acre landscape with masses of modern roses and a lake.



Innovative gardens at the Chaumont festival near Blois

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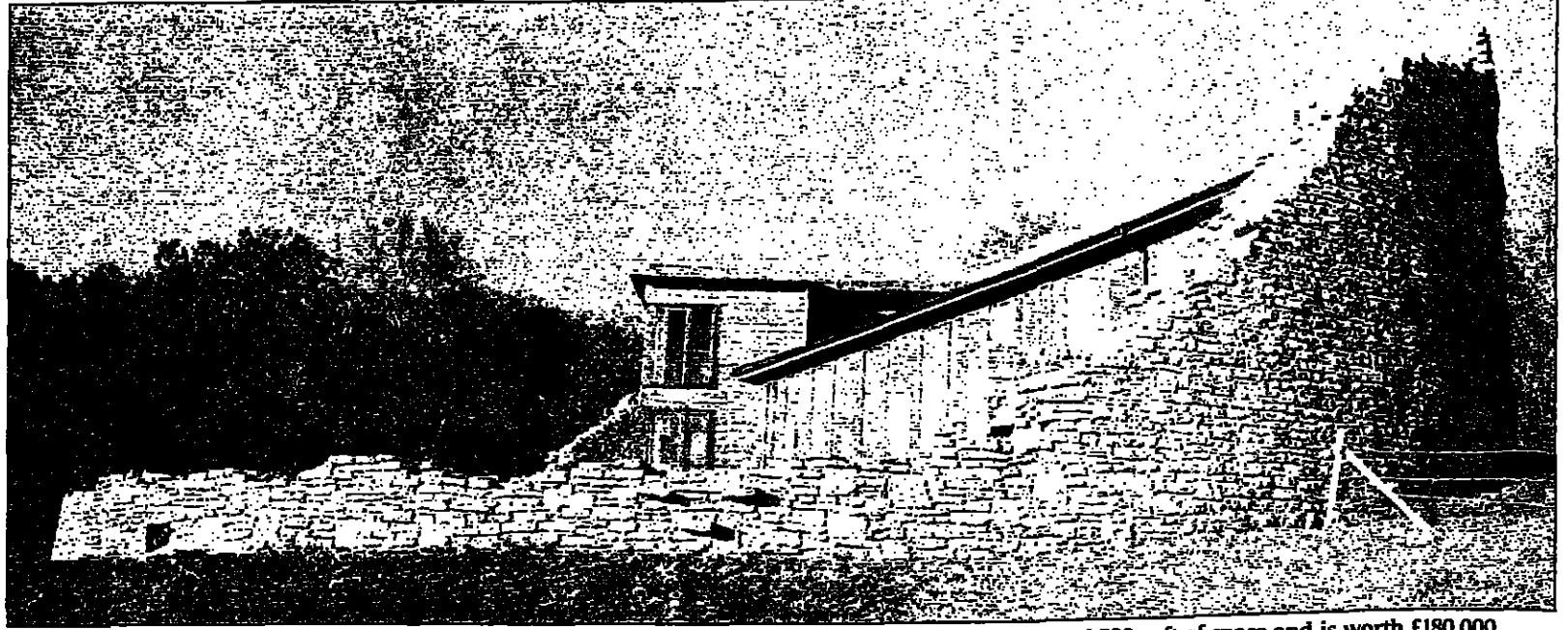
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The rooms inside the "castle" at Carrick Lough, South Fermanagh, have huge glass windows facing southwest, ensuring spectacular sunsets. The five-bedroom, four-bathroom house has about 1,500sq ft of space and is worth £180,000

The man who ruined his house

Rachel Kelly meets an architect who has built a home in the Irish countryside to look like a derelict castle

High on a hilltop above Carrick Lough in South Fermanagh stands what appears to be a half-ruined ancient stone fort. Pass through a door, and you enter a low chamber flanked by white-washed stone. Only when you pass into a light, white room with smooth walls does the spell break. This, you realise, is a modern house built to look like a ruin.

Architect Richard Pierce, 54, chose to build in this ancient vernacular because of his love for Irish history. Nowhere is a sense of the past more obvious than at Carrick Lough. Within view of the house is an Iron Age burial place, a crannog, or defensible island, which still has oak posts from the 9th century, a listed ring fort and, across the lake, a 15th-century church.



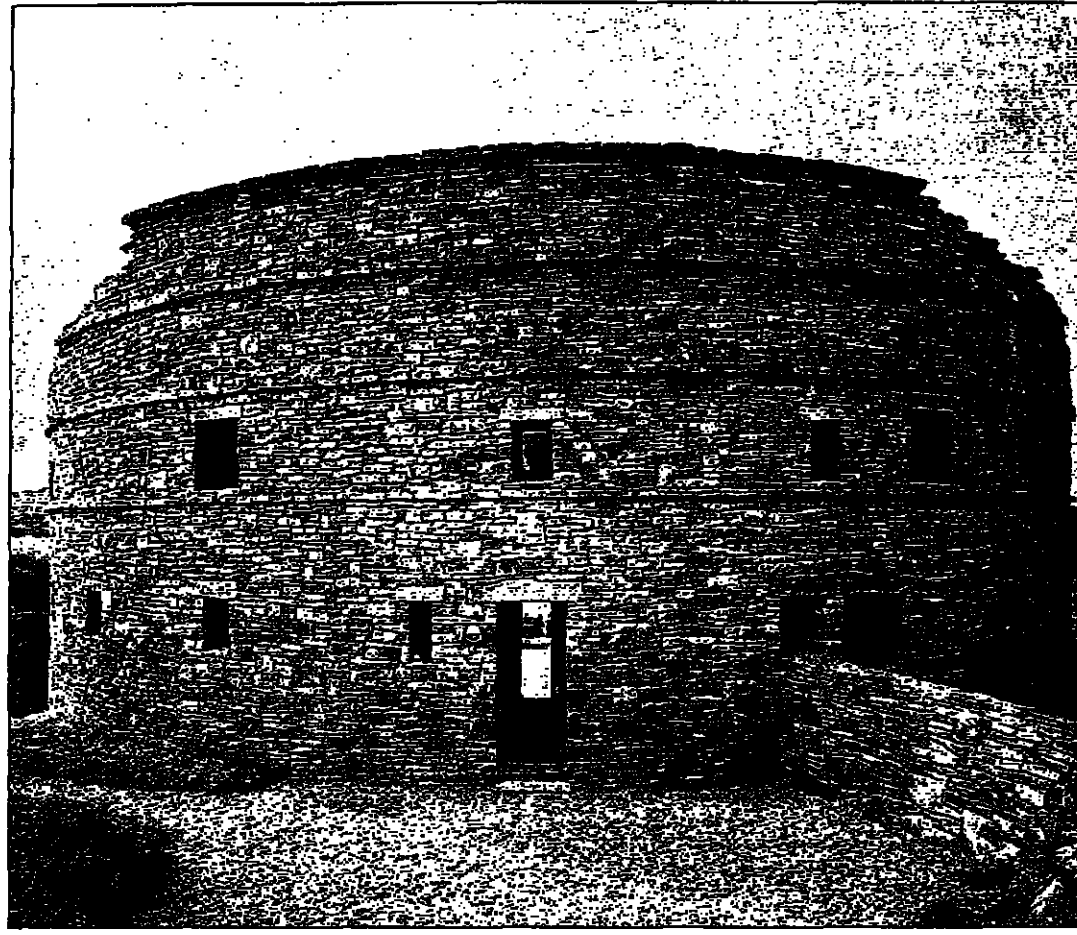
Richard Pierce: has spent seven years creating his "ruin"

Romantic, they are my childhood. I regret the number of Southforks built by people with a lack of respect for Irish culture and its environment.

Mr Pierce bought the site seven years ago, and only now is putting the finishing touches to his five-bedroom, four-bathroom £180,000 house (£40,000 went on stone work alone). The main building work was finished 18 months ago but Mr Pierce is still fine-tuning details.

Modern vertical radiators disguised as fluted columns feel too classical for the house, and have turned out to be redundant as the house's shutters have proved so effective.

His aim was to create a house which would not intrude on its surroundings. He has succeeded gloriously: the house blends with the greys and blues and stone and water that surround it. Invisible

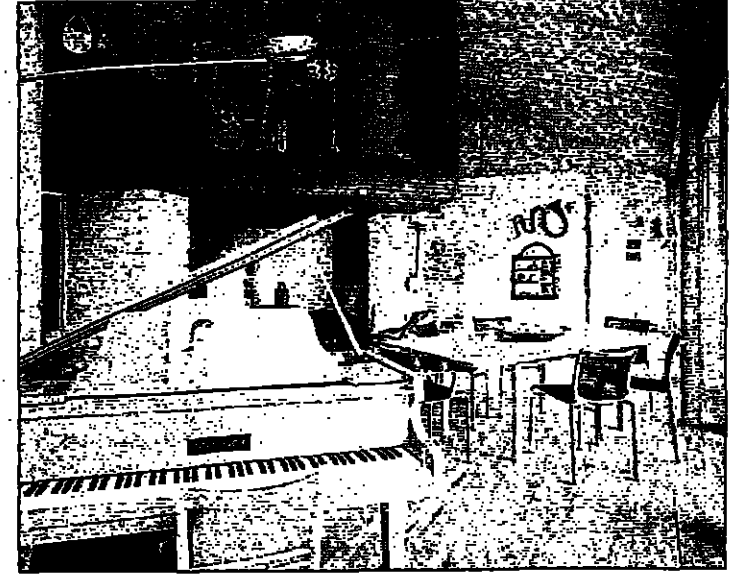


The house has been designed to blend in with its surroundings, with no point higher than five metres

from the road, it nestles in the corner of a field, partly hidden by hazel and birch hedges. Instead of a garden it is surrounded by the natural landscape, carpeted with wild flowers and home to red squirrels. Thirty-seven holes designed into the exterior stone wall are now teeming with bees, bats, starlings, swallows and wag-tails. Moss and

lichen cling to many of the stones. At night it is not uncommon for hares and badgers to find themselves caught in the walled enclosure. The diamond-shaped pool in the garden is filled with sticklebacks and plants relocated from the lake below.

Mr Pierce had long wished to build his own home. As an Enniskillen-based architect, who trained in Edinburgh and worked in Pennsylvania, he redesigned the interior of Carlow Cathedral. He had planning permission for a 1,800sq ft house, about the size of a conventional four-bedroom terrace house. No point of the house was to be higher than five metres above the existing ground level, so



The music room, where Mr Pierce's son Rory can play the pipes

he used the slope of the hill. Inside, he has created a two-storey sandstone building with about 1,500sq ft of space. This may not sound much, but the space has been used to best effect with a main communal area leading to circular rooms.

There are three other circular rooms on the ground floor, a kitchen, a music room where his 27-year-old son, Rory, can play the pipes, and his winter bedroom, all decorated in simple, modern form. There are souvenirs from Mali, East Africa, India, Japan and China.

The house is the antithesis of colonial Anglo-Irish architecture and the stately balance seen at houses such as Castletown, now the home of the Irish Georgian Society.

Only half of the circular enclosure is covered by the house itself, the other half is a gravel garden

looking down over the lough. The angular stone tower and 40ft glass wall separate house from garden.

The rooms nesting inside the tower have enormous glass windows facing southwest, thereby absorbing the Irish rays, however rare and faint, and ensuring spectacular views of sunsets. At night the room is transformed by closing the white shutters, which are painted vermilion on the outside. There is a gravel garden inside the circle, complete with pond which also maximises the light.

"It is a case of having your cake and eating it. You live in a ruin, but yet you can look out across this landscape," says Mr Pierce.

Are there any disadvantages? He thinks about this for ages. "Well," he says eventually, "I suppose from a location point of view it is an extra half hour to Dublin or Belfast. But I wouldn't sell it for the world."

New money captures old places

Dispossessed aristocrats don't like it when the arrivistes move into their estates. Tom Rowland reports

It must be galling for an aristocratic family that can trace its lineage back to Charlemagne via his grandson Charles the Bald to see a rich newcomer married in what was once its castle.

Doubly so if the dispossessed family has been badly down on its financial luck for most of this century.

A dashing 31-year-old, who inherited £50 million, now holds the title deeds to Sudeley Castle, while the former owner lives in a flat in a rundown mansion block near Baker Street Tube station.

In May, the man who was billed as Britain's most eligible bachelor, Henry Dent-Brocklehurst, married model Lili Maltse and afterwards entertained 350 guests at Sudeley Castle near Winchcombe in Gloucestershire. It was the wedding of the year, held in the castle that Dent-Brocklehurst inherited in 1997 and where he proposed to his Hawaiian-born wife.

The details did not escape Lord Sudeley, 58-year-old Tory and chairman of the Monday Club and the Constitutional Monarchy Association. His is the flat in the mansion block just off the Marylebone Road. He would love to get the family lands back but cannot afford them.

famous collection of glass. The family lost Sudeley Castle itself a long time before, during the Wars of the Roses, and set up the family seat four miles away at Toddington Manor. That house has been forlorn, empty and on the market for the past 12 years at an asking price of £3 million. It is owned by a Geneva-based property company waiting for a market upturn that never seems to come.

The Dent-Brocklehursts, on the other hand, represent new money. Although Lord Sudeley's family has not been the major landowner in the area since 1900, he still sees the corner of Gloucestershire around Winchcombe as his estate.

He is currently campaigning to get the bankruptcy laws altered so that others will not lose their inheritances in a brutal and, he argues, unfair way in the future. "Whatever our debt, which was accumulated during the agricultural depression, it was covered twice over by large assets, but Lloyds Bank wanted its immediate payment," he claims.

The lands had to be sold at a fraction of their real worth after his great-grandfather built up debts by speculating in Argentine bonds.



Lord Sudeley in his London flat. He gave up his family seat due to financial difficulties

can get their hands on assets that are then sold off cheaply. But Lord Sudeley's is not the only old family to have moved out of its ancestral home. In order of precedence, the Duke of Somerset is Britain's second most senior duke. He has recently completed rebuilding a modest farmhouse near Berry Pomeroy in South Devon. Completion of the little house marks the final phase of the most dramatic dowry of any duke in recent years.

The seat of the Dukes of Somerset is in Maiden Bradley in Wiltshire. The family has been under financial pressure for years and has lived in the shadow of its far richer neighbour at Longleat, the Marquess of Bath. More than 100 years ago, the family demolished two thirds of the classical mansion at Maiden Bradley to make it more manageable, and ruined the architectural composition in the process. Two years ago the 19th duke

relocated to Devon, renting out Maiden Bradley on a long lease for about £1,000 a week. He hopes that one day his heir may be able to return. The house is now occupied by a rich industrialist.

There is a lost castle in the life of the Duke of Somerset, too. He and his wife have two sons and two daughters and, as he takes the younger ones to the village school, he passes the roofless majesty of Berry Pomeroy castle, once the forti-



Sudeley Castle is now owned by millionaire Henry Dent-Brocklehurst and his wife Lili

RECENTLY LANDED GENTRY

■ BEAUFORT Castle is a fairy-tale turreted folly set in the ancient Lovat lands on the banks of Beaulieu in Inverness-shire. The castle plus 11 cottages, the home farm and 800 acres were sold by the Lovat family which had lived there for the best part of 800 years. Three years ago they were no longer able to afford the upkeep of the place.

The buyer in the most conspicuous sale to new money in recent years was Ann Gloag, born in a council flat in Perth and now boss of her own bus company, Stagecoach. She picked up the lot for £2 million.

■ AUBREY House on top of Campden Hill in Kensington cost the Swedish family best known for its fortune made from Tetrapac cartons rather more — about £225 million.

The house, set in two acres of walled gardens, had been owned by the Alexander family for 120 years. The late William Alexander founded — and made a fortune from — Alexander's Discount Bank, now part of Credit Lyonnais, the state-owned French bank which has regularly to be bailed out by its government.



The late Lord Lovat in Beaufort Castle before the family was forced to sell up

■ THE Fisher-Burdett family did rather nicely out of another Swedish businessman, selling its 3,000-acre Wiltshire estate at auction to Stefan Persson, the rags-to-riches boss of the fashion chain Hennes & Mauritz. He had to pay £17 million, making the transaction the most expensive estate sale of 1997.

built between 1820 and 1835 by Charles Hanbury-Tracy who went on to become an MP and chaired the commission to judge the designs for the present Houses of Parliament. He persuaded the committee to choose the design that was most like his own house.

Lord Sudeley, who is also a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, is an expert on the furniture of the house, the stained glass in its windows and the details of the building's

construction. Perhaps the best hope for the house is that a giant restoration project will attract money for the building.

But as the Lord Chancellor would testify, thorough renovations of Gothic-revival buildings do not come cheap — which leaves the Hanbury-Tracy, Lords of Sudeley, and dukes of Somerset to gently fade out of the limelight as more dynamic and trusting replacements lord it around their old homes.

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Nathaniel Parker and wife Anna Patrick liked the building's theatrical proportions



William Blake House in Battersea, south London, is as grand and imposing on the outside as it is warm and welcoming on the inside

Rachel Campbell-Johnston looks over the converted Victorian school in Battersea which actor Nathaniel Parker is selling for £1.3 million

Do you remember those long summer hours in the classroom: that lazy pool of light on the floor, the dust dancing in the sunshine? Would you like to recapture them? Then now is the time to let the inner schoolchild free.

Part of a converted Victorian schoolhouse has come up for sale in Battersea, south London, one of seven homes in William Blake House.

The geography room, maths room and the staff room of what was once the William Blake School are now the home of the actor Nathaniel Parker — currently playing Gabriel Oak in the ITV drama series *Far From the Madding Crowd* — and his wife Anna Patrick, who is about to star with Robson Greene in a drama called *Reckless*.

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

"I like the idea that when I go for a pee it is in the old staff room," says Mr Parker, the son of the former British Rail chairman Sir Peter Parker.

When he bought the building five years ago, it was the spaciousness that attracted him — the expansive floors, the towering ceilings, the rows of long windows drenching the rooms in sun. Estate agents' cameras may be notoriously flattering, but this is one of those properties to which even the widest angle lens is unfair. It makes loft-living look like a tight fit.

The converted school, in Bridge Lane, just south of Battersea Bridge, is part of the Lanterns development and has become fashionable

among those with a flair for interior invention. Viscount Linley recently bought one, also in Battersea, while Anton Mosimann and Mark Getty have also made their homes here in William Blake House.

In the evenings, delicious dinner-party smells from Mr Mosimann's kitchen waft out across the old playground, which now provides free off-street parking for at least four cars to each home, as well as a backdrop for high fashion photoshoots. Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss and Diana, Princess of Wales have all posed there. "The security is excellent," Mr Parker explains.

"There are people who find so much space intimidating," he says. But he and his wife, who bought the building as an empty shell, designing and developing its interiors themselves, have concentrated on opening it up even more.

A buyer will get, if nothing else, a lot of air for the £1.3 million asking price for the freehold of this property. Polished boards stretch into the distance, gilt mirrors hold whole vistas in their glass and, in the vast drawing room, windows have been set into an interior wall, opening out on to the staircase so that the entire upper floor is flooded with light.

washbasins stand side by side, school cloakroom-style, and on the iron stairway that climbs up through the spine of the building, you can almost hear the noisy clatter of children's shoes.

But this property is not a pastiche. There are some idiosyncratic touches to its design. To one side of the immense bedroom, with its vaulted ceiling and open views over surrounding rooftops, stands a vast claw-footed bathtub.

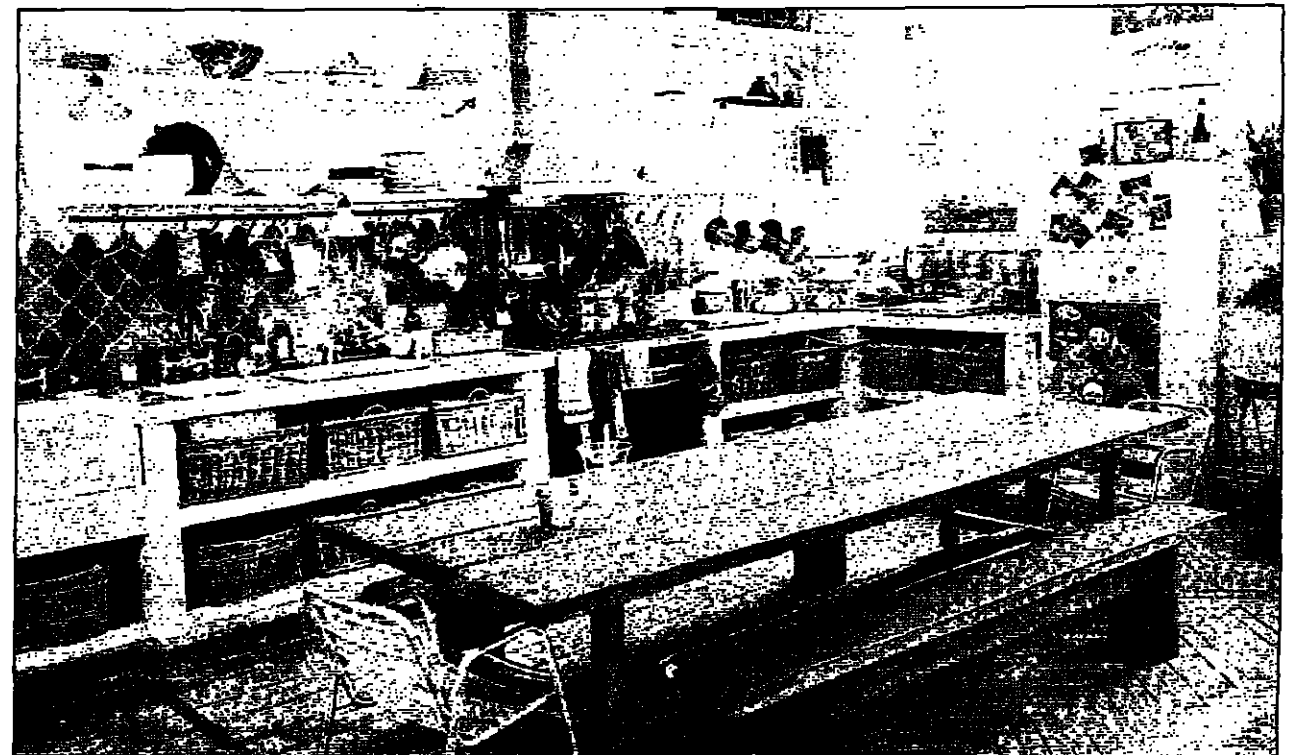
"It's sheer delight to step out of the bath and tumble straight into bed," Mr Parker says. But, more unusually, there is also a lavatory. "It is useful," Mr Parker says. "In a house this size, you would have to walk some way to get to the bathroom at night."

Mr Parker and his wife are moving house because, with an 18-month-old daughter and another child on the way, they want to be nearer their other friends with children in Notting Hill, west London.

But what they leave behind is a building with potential. There is still enormous scope for invention at No 2 William Blake House.

"On the top storey a whole second floor could be built — a mezzanine with a balustrade — without ruining the height or light," Mr Parker says. And the cellars, with their bulky schoolroom boilers, are still untouched. It will need someone with a creative imagination to take on the task.

Agents: Hamptons, 0171-496 8686; Knight Frank, 0171-629 8171; Aylesford, 0171-351 2383.



The huge kitchen has the original fireplace and herringbone wooden floor from the schoolhouse



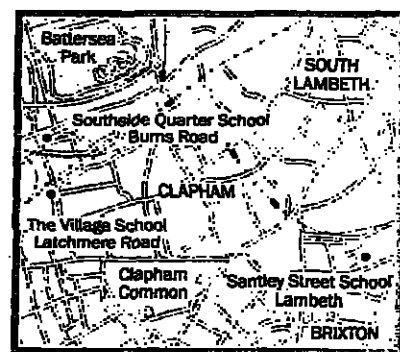
Mr Parker (right) in his role as Gabriel Oak

MARKET COMMENT

LONDON's stock of redundant Victorian municipal buildings — schools and hospitals in particular — has found a profitable new lease of life in recent years, with a burst of conversions into upmarket apartments. Their appeal for young urban professionals is similar to that of East London's converted warehouses: high ceilings, big windows, spaciousness, architectural interest.

Often the vastness of these buildings gives scope for on-site gyms, swimming pools, sauna and underground car parking. They are also sought after by those who want to work from home, and may be sold as shells rather than completed units, so that people can stamp their own mark on their space.

Retaining the outer appearance of the building is certainly one major part of the equation, says Knight Frank's Tony



D'Alton, but developers (of whom Sapcote is to the fore) have latched on to the importance of producing units that make sympathetic use of the original features within the apartments.

"The London Board schools were designed last century for children with rickets, with the emphasis on light and brightness, and developers have to make the most of that angle," he says.

Such developments tend to be concentrated in certain areas: Wandsworth, for instance, has sold off a number of its state schools, and Battersea now boasts a clutch of expensive addresses, including The Village in Latchmere Road and Southside Quarter in Burns Road. In Lambeth, Stanley Street school is scheduled for a similar overhaul, while Sapcote has another project in Peckham.

Prices reflect the yuppie market. Mr D'Alton estimates a price of £350,000 in Battersea for 1,200 to 1,400 sq ft.

Sara Greybow at Hamptons International says: "These are very expensive developments in terms of square footage, compared with Battersea prices. And buyers generally have to be cast-iron too because, if they buy a shell, it is not easy to get a mortgage which also covers the internal work that has to be done." That, she adds, could cost upwards of £50,000.

FAITH GLASGOW

SMART MOVES

MIRANDA, Countess of Iveagh, is selling her eight-bedroom house in Cottesmore Gardens, Kensington, London W8. The Countess, who has lived in the house for 18 years, plans to spend more time in the country, where she has bought a new estate in Wiltshire.



Countess of Iveagh

LUCY PHILLIPS, owner of historic Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire, has failed to find a buyer for the house where the Queen and Prince Philip spent their honeymoon, nearly a year after it first went up for sale at £25 million. Agent Knight Frank is re-advertising the house.



The Queen, Prince Philip

BASSA ASPINALL, son of zoo owner John Aspinall, is selling his house near Cape Town, South Africa. Four years after moving into the beachfront Villa Romelia, Mr Aspinall is returning to Britain. For £1.2 million, the house comes with extensive tropical gardens and swimming pool.

RACHEL KELLY

HOME SWAP

PRICES are still rising in Chelsea, west London, but more slowly, according to Land Registry figures. The SW3 postcode is still the most expensive area in London to buy a terraced house, with an average price of £659,090, a rise of 14 per cent over the previous year. Kensington, W8, however, tops the list for all property types, at an average of £374,813, up 13.5 per cent on 1997.

London buyers looking for family homes are moving to Northamptonshire. About 30 minutes' drive from Peterborough, 45 minutes by fast train from King's Cross, you can buy a detached stone-built three-bedroom village house, around the market town of Uffington, for £120,000. Large country houses with a couple of acres start at £450,000, says FPD Savills.

The Estate office of estate agent Knight Frank reports strong demand for country houses priced from £400,000, which buys a six-bedroom rectory in five acres. About £750,000 buys a restored manor house in 25 acres. Farmhouses with a few acres of paddocks, from £250,000. Prices slip west of Okehampton, where terraced village houses can be had for under £50,000.



This two-bedroom terraced house with a roof terrace and rear patio, in Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London SW3, costs £550,000 (John D. Wood, 0171-352 1484).

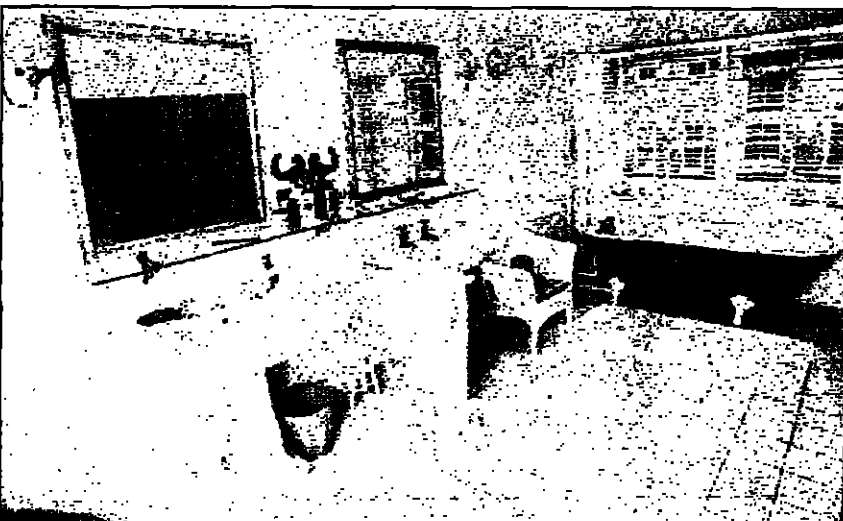


In Northamptonshire, a similar sum will buy The Millhouse at Cottesstock, near Uffington, a Grade II listed eight-bedroom Georgian country house on the river Nene (FPD Savills, 01780 750200).



For slightly less, you can buy Botham House, an eight-bedroom Grade II listed Regency country house in 8.5 acres, near Tiverton. It has two cottages and a lodge (Knight Frank, 01352 423111).

CHELYN TAYLOR



The white-painted bathroom is roughly 16sq ft, with west-facing windows



Light floods in through the bedroom's tall windows, where schoolchildren once gazed out during lessons

50 من الأصلي

Diary of a househunter

MONDAY
I read another report about how housebuyers should beware of rising interest rates and a looming recession. We are destined to buy at the peak of the housing boom.

TUESDAY
We are back looking in Earlsfield, SW18. The adage of "cultivate a relationship with an estate agent" is true. Anna-Maria at Kirtleighs is the only agent to ever call us about a new property on her books. We are urged to see a flat that has been "down-valued" from £115,000 to £108,000.

WEDNESDAY
The two-bedroom flat is one long corridor with a small kitchen. "Where do



they eat?" I ask. Anna-Maria smiles and lifts a tiny plastic flap from the wall.

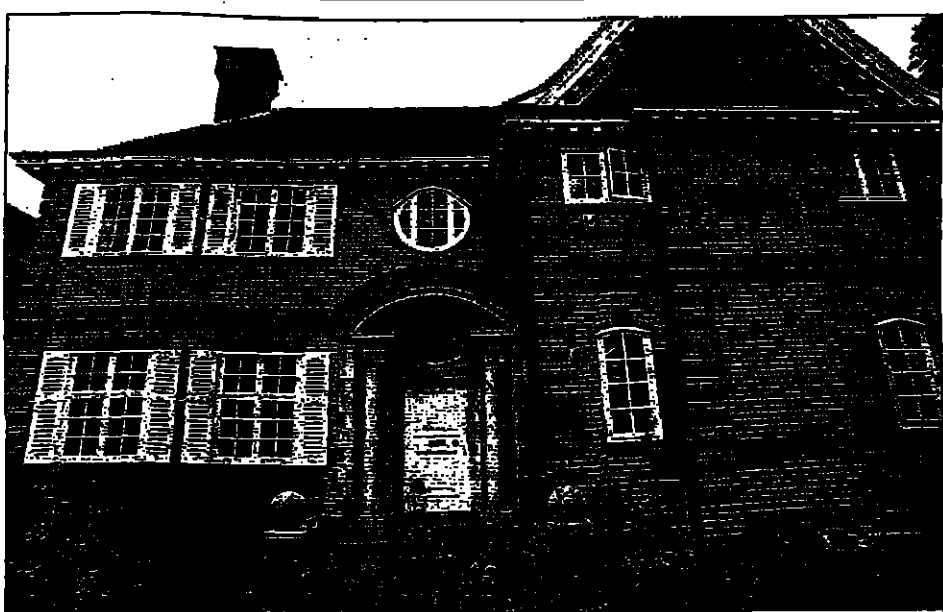
THURSDAY
We view a first-floor one-bedroom flat. It is after work, the supper on the stove smells good and the sun is shining. This could be the one. We stand in the garden overlooking the river Wandie, complete with a weeping willow, and make an offer of the asking price. At £94,950, our repayments would be only £621 per month.

FRIDAY
Our offer is accepted.

EMMA MAHONY

● Next week: the flat has subsidence.

Buying council property has gone sour for some first-timers tempted by low prices, Rachel Kelly writes



The Hampstead property which was sold off to tenants under the right-to-buy scheme

Right to buy, left to rot

The right to buy was one of Margaret Thatcher's most popular policies, but nearly 20 years later many people are struggling to sell the houses they bought with such optimism. Figures from the London Housing Unit suggest that about 70,000 council-house owners every year have had problems reselling their property, more than half of them in London.

The root of the difficulty is that even the most dilapidated, asbestos-ridden, structurally-flawed council houses found new owners in the booming 1980s. As David Fotheringham, principal policy officer at the Chartered Institute of Housing, puts it, there were some "ill-advised buys".

Now a new generation of first-time buyers raised on tales of repossession and negative equity is cautious about buying the same stock. They ignore former council properties in favour of buying quality, says Guy Kyriacou from the Abbey National.

"The housing market in general is more cautious now," he

says. "Back in the 1980s, people were desperate to get on the property ladder. Now we are seeing the problems which this has created."

Many owners are now suffering from what were originally stopgap measures. In the original right-to-buy arrangements, buyers often agreed to pay for any refurbishments carried out on the estate.

But such proposals were sometimes made more attractive by clauses that restricted service charges for the first five years, or offered the original tenants a ten-year exemption from building charges or guaranteed council payment for structural insurance for the same period.

Such measures have either now expired, or are of no use to second buyers. Any unpaid bills may effectively be added to the property price for a prospective owner.

One couple suffering exorbitant repair bills is Brian Sloam and his wife Gillian who own a two-bedroom flat in Hampstead, north London. They accept that even if they wanted to sell, potential buy-

ers would be put off by ensuing legal problems with Camden Council.

The flat was originally bought by Mr Sloam's mother-in-law, Maria Wilson, for £18,000 with the full 50 per cent discount she was entitled to under the right-to-buy legislation in 1984 after 20 years of renting. The property is one of eight flats in a typical Hampstead mansion. "The house would be worth millions," he says.

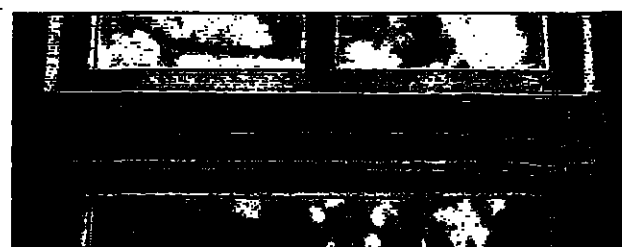
But the dream quickly soured. In 1987, Mr Sloam's 80-year-old mother-in-law received a bill for almost £4,000 for roof repairs.

Mr Sloam is still fighting the legal battle that began with his objection to that bill. "I'd say that 90 per cent of the problem is down to the council," he says. "We felt that the initial work was so badly done that we refused to pay. As far as we were concerned, the council had allowed a leak to develop into full-scale dry rot. We also believed that we had been charged for work that hadn't been done."

In December 1996, the Coun-



Brian and Gillian Sloam have been locked in a battle with Camden Council over a £4,000 bill for roof repairs



Details such as the window frames were poorly finished

ty Court ordered Camden to pay the Sloams £4,000 in damages and to start work to put the property in order. However, the work was not completed, and Mr Sloam's queries were not answered. So he again had to threaten legal action before the council sent a surveyor round and agreed to start work next year.

But that was two weeks ago. For now, the Sloams have to wait as they have done for more than ten years, for the roof repairs to be completed.

Paul Wastell, a spokesman from Camden Council, says: "We are committed to the pro-

vision of high-quality services. In this case we accept that we haven't provided a good service. Our record with right-to-buy properties has been somewhat patchy. We are making inroads in making this service as good as every other council."

Others in Camden who bought council property have been faced with huge insurance demands. Marjory Howe, from the Association of Camden Council Leaseholders, made a legal protest in 1995.

"They played us along for 18 months," she says, "and then within three weeks of the start of the court case the council paid the leaseholders the

money they owed plus legal costs." She estimates the total sum to have been around £1.5 million.

Lenders, too, are wary of the problems with former council housing. Buyers of lower-grade council housing, especially inner-city flats, may therefore have trouble negotiating a mortgage.

Building societies have been rattled by changes to mortgage indemnity insurance that made it more difficult for a lender to insure a mortgage. An Abbey National spokesman says that there is no discrimination against lending on such property.

To those prepared to negotiate the potential landmine of buying such property, agents wax lyrical about some former council property for sale, such as the Golden Lane estate in the Barbican.

Adrian Bagnell, of estate agents Hurford Salvi Carr, is selling a number of two-bedroom flats there for about £125,000 each. The attractions, he says, are value for money and location.

"There are council houses

and council houses. The listed 1950s architecture of Golden Lane, with tennis courts, a swimming pool and a nursery, is particularly impressive."

Erica Wagner, *The Times* Literary Editor, is one of the lucky ones. She bought a townhouse formerly owned by the council in Shoreditch, east London, two years ago for £84,500.

"The house had a fantastic survey," she says. "It was built in the late 1970s when, I guess, the council had money to burn. There are a few council tenants left, and the area is now very gentrified."

But for Mr Fotheringham, of the Chartered Institute of Housing, such tales are a reminder of the failure of the right-to-buy scheme.

"Our concern is that many of the homes that have been bought are the better properties, those with three or four bedrooms, those in great demand from homeless families and those on council waiting lists."

SURREY - Farnham Price Guide: £650,000
A handsome house with character in a sought-after location in South Farnham. 7 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, shower room, 5 reception rooms, kitchen, 2 cloakrooms, utility room, garage and gardens of approximately 0.7 of an acre.
FARNHAM OFFICE: 01252 737115

SURREY - Farnham Price Guide: £335,000
In the centre of this Georgian town, a charming Grade II listed house in Castle Street with a pretty walled garden. 3 bedrooms, bathroom, 3 reception rooms, kitchen, breakfast/garden room, stair hall/lobby area, cloakroom and garage.
FARNHAM OFFICE: 01252 737115

SURREY - Farnham Price Guide: £375,000
A pretty turn of the century cottage with planning consent to extend, a self-contained annexe above the double garage and walled gardens of about one acre. 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 reception rooms, kitchen, cloakroom, utility room, stable block with two boxes and tack room.
FARNHAM OFFICE: 01252 737115

JOHN D WOOD & CO
LONDON AND COUNTRY ESTATE AGENTS ESTABLISHED 1872

OXFORDSHIRE - Aynho Price Guide: £785,000
Dating back to the 17th century, a fine Grade II listed house with walled gardens and grounds, in the centre of the village. 7 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, dressing room, 3 attic rooms, 5 reception rooms, 3 roomed cellar, barn/garage/woodshop and further outbuilding. About 1.3 acres.
OXFORD OFFICE: 01865 311522

OXFORD - Boars Hill Price Guide: £595,000
A picturesque house, built in 1932, in private walled gardens and grounds adjacent to Oxford Preservation Trust Land. 6 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, separate WC, 3 attic rooms, 3 reception rooms, kitchen, cloakroom and double garage. About 0.45 ha (1.1 acres).
OXFORD OFFICE: 01865 311522

PEEL STREET, W8. Freehold £550,000
With a south-facing patio, a well decorated Victorian house on three floors. 3 bedrooms, bathroom, 2 shower rooms, reception room, kitchen and laundry area.
KENSINGTON OFFICE: 0171 727 0705

WILTSHIRE - Whiteparish
In a secluded position, a superb house standing in mature grounds, which include woodland and a paddock. 4 bedrooms, bathroom, shower room, reception hall, cloakroom, 3 reception rooms, conservatory, garage and self-contained 2 bedroom flat. About 1.21 ha (3 acres).
WINCHESTER OFFICE: 01962 863131

STREATHAM COMMON SOUTH, SW16. Freehold £475,000
With panoramic views of Streatham Common and towards the South Downs, a well presented period house in an elevated position. 6 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 4 reception rooms, kitchen, cloakroom, cellar and garden.
WANDSWORTH OFFICE: 0181 871 3033

HEAD OFFICE: 26 CURZON STREET, LONDON W1Y 8LD. 0171-493 4106 FAX: 0171-629 6071 <http://www.johnwood.co.uk>

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سكوا من الأصل

'My first port of call absolutely every time I go to an agricultural event is the tent where they are giving away food'

Full of beans at the farm show

Over the past few days, my mother has been fretting over a news item about a motorist who was stopped by the Colchester police and found to be wearing wellington boots full of baked beans.

"Why do you think he did it?" she asked me, as if I, having a more intimate, daily relationship with wellington boots, held the key to the mystery. (Maybe I do: I used to have a friend at primary school who liked putting tadpoles in her shoes.)

But a question which has been bothering me far more is: "Why do people go to agricultural shows?" I've just got back from the Royal Show, and was reassured to be stopped at the gate as I left and asked to fill in a questionnaire on why I'd gone and what I'd enjoyed doing. Clearly, the authorities are puzzled too.

Normally I go to agricultural shows because I have to. I'm needed to hold on to a gelding while my husband readjusts some obscure piece of machinery, or else I'm helping behind the scenes in a results tent, deciphering the wobbly, spidery handwriting of livestock judges.

But this time I'd gone just for the

pleasure of it — a day out for me and my teenage daughter, after a typical July week spent removing nightmarish quantities of maggots from the sheep. (This takes two people: one to rub disinfectant into the infested wool, the other to hold the sheep still while expatiating on all the reasons why they, personally, are never ever going to become a farmer.)

I'm ashamed to say that the first place I go, whenever I arrive at any show, is always the food tent. I can never resist the free samples — even if they're of things I don't usually relish, such as double cream liqueur or garlic-flavoured mustard spread on dry cream crackers.

A primitive hunter-gathering instinct overwhelms me, and I stuff myself until I feel sick. At the Devon County Show, a friend of my son once managed to fill a huge carrier bag to the brim with free miniature Edam cheeses. It took him all

day and involved assuming numerous different disguises, and I have always felt envious of his achievement. The other show activity which I invariably end up doing is visiting the educational exhibits for the wrong reasons. This year, at the Royal, I spent a long while staring at a bronze turkey with a corn-shaped wattle above his beak, and trying — by telepathy — to get him to inflate it.

Later, I came across a stand of genetically engineered wheat, and attempted to summon the courage (despite the presence of numerous officials) to snap off a

DOWN TO EARTH



LUCY PINNEY

souvenir. I failed but noticed that plenty of others hadn't. I suspect that this frivolous response to the didactic side of shows isn't unusual. Reading accounts of the farming demonstrations laid on by the War Agricultural Committees in the 1940s, to introduce the rural community to radical ideas such as caterpillar tractors and pipe-laying machines, I was cheered by the reception accorded to the first appearance of electric fencing.

Apparently, it wasn't so much a hit with farmers as with small children, who were immediately attracted by the

unpleasant tingling sensation it gave, and saw its potential for games of daring.

Of course, nowadays it's harder to work out why people are going to agricultural shows because these events seem to have less and less to do with farming. Each year the machinery section shrinks and the craft tents expand, until the casual observer could be forgiven for assuming that the whole event wasn't so much about animals and working the land as about shopping.

At the Royal this year, one item on offer was an electric whisk that could turn semi-skimmed milk — or cooking oil — into a dense, unappetising froth. The spectators gravely tasted the meals prepared by this gadget, then paid huge sums to possess one.

The job of the traders was made even more difficult by the fact that the Royal

crowd was so genteel and reserved, and reluctant to answer any of their questions. "If you lot could chop an onion?" the man selling vegetable slicers asked in a sarcastic tone, hoping to sting his audience into a reply.

Over in the food tent, another trader, selling woks, had a better ploy: he gave a tin of baked beans to anyone in the crowd who responded to his patter — no matter what they said.

As we wandered back to our car for the journey home, I tried to think of a way of applying these useful lessons to the business of selling livestock and corn.

Clutching her tin of beans, my daughter pointed out crossly that, for the money we'd spent getting into the show, a couple of students could have gone out clubbing, got drunk, and rounded off the evening with a large, nourishing meal.

It was hard to think of a suitable rejoinder. Maybe people go to agricultural shows for the same reason they put squishy things in their footwear because they've got an odd concept of pleasure, and it seems like a good idea at the time.



A festival-goer enjoys the fringe alternative to the Welsh National Festival: "the innocent atmosphere of an early 1970s pop festival"

Laid back in Llangollen

The Eisteddfod has spawned an offbeat 'fringe' version at Llangollen. Rory Knight Bruce paid a visit

If you have driven to Ireland by the ferry road which snakes from Shrewsbury to Holyhead you will probably have stopped at the traffic lights in Llangollen.

Until recently this modest border town's chief claim to fame were an international singing eisteddfod and the "ladies of Llangollen" — Lady Eleanor Butler and the Hon Sarah Ponsonby who fell in love in 1768 and eventually settled in nearby Plas Newydd, where they vowed that no man should ever sleep under their roof and devoted themselves to "friendship, celibacy and the knitting of blue stockings".

Since last weekend the 4,000 residents of the town have been basking in a third claim to fame — its first "fringe" eisteddfod, staged in a tent on Willow Hill, a patch of common ground above the town (feliciously about to be turned over to housing development). The event was the idea of Guy Kennaway, the novelist whose works include *I Can Feel It Moving*, *The Winner of the Hooker Prize* and, most recently, *One People*.

Mr Kennaway's three-day "fest" owed as much to mayhem as the muses. It featured the violinist Nigel Kennedy getting his car crunched, the avant-garde artist Tracey Emin and an impromptu appearance by the Scottish poets Murray Lachlan Young and Jock Scott. Llangollen's unconventional past lends

itself to such festivals. Gollen was the first vicar of Glastonbury before building a now ruined church here among the sheep drovers and farmhands.

Appropriately, the festival attracted a number of aged VW camper vans, their occupants well stoked with "Camberwell carrots". Even sell-out performances could cope with only 200 people. If the event did not entirely evoke the spiritual essence of early Christianity, it certainly had the innocent atmosphere of an early 1970s pop festival.

Dogs milled around, men's earrings glistened in the sunshine and Mr Kennaway, 41, who lives with his family in a restored manor in nearby Horseshoe Pass, sat at the table and chair which was the box office. "I first had the idea when a local friend, Dave Lee, asked if he could have a rave on our land," says Mr Kennaway. "Absolutely not," I said, but it got me thinking."

Then, over lunch with the literary critic Cressida Connolly, he met Bruce Robinson, who offered to come and read from his first novel, *The Peculiar Memories of Thomas Penman*, and the fringe was conceived.

Jay Jopling, owner of the White Cube Gallery in London which represents Tracey Emin and Sarah Jane Lovett, was brought in to help with the organisation. Mr Jopling's informal Burning Bush company also brought on Murray Lachlan Young and Jock Scott,

the Bohemian troubadour, well known on the London pub circuit. "You could call us a paranoia of poets," said Mr Scott. "I just came because Jock is a friend of mine," said Mr Young, as we wandered about the Kennaway gardens before his performance. "I'm going to concentrate on this fringe stuff for a bit."

His concentration required considerable discipline, as at that point Howard Marks appeared, his eyes like stop signs and long hair wet from a shower designed to kick his 53-year-old body back into life. "Drugs Baron to speak at Llangollen" the *Liverpool Daily Post* had screamed disapprovingly the day before his arrival. "I quite like this fame thing," said Mr Marks, with his naughty smile and soft Welsh voice.

His five years in an American prison had certainly helped his abstinence and narcotics intake, but he was making up for it now. "I got very drunk at lunchtime," he said, explaining his condition. Outside there was also a burned-out sofa, which had required the services of the fire brigade. "I must have been smoking and fallen asleep," he smiled.

The night before, Mr Kennaway had ushered on Tracey Emin and the Screaming Men of Finland. Emin (who memorably walked off a Turner Prize television debate last year with the words, "I want to



Organiser Guy Kennaway

be with my Mum. I don't give a f---. You people aren't relating to me now") went missing, but she hadn't gone to her mum's. "She was found with some locals at 3am," recalls Mr Kennaway. "Here was the sharp end of contemporary chic talking to dry-stone wallers and fence builders."

In performance Ms Emin has a bitter truth about her as she talks about bad sex, bad men and very, very bad hangovers. "She has certainly got a future in fringe work," conceded a nervous Mr Jopling. Bad hangovers were a conversation she could happily have had with the 30 Screaming Men of Finland, half of whom refused to leave for their plane because they were enjoying themselves so much. "Given that they were all squashed on to a floor with barely dry concrete is, I suppose, a compliment," admits Mr Kennaway.



Howard Marks, Jock Scott and Murray Lachlan Young

Lucky to get away at all was the artist formerly known as Nigel Kennedy, who popped over from his official performance at the real eisteddfod to hear local violinist Mandy Todd. Unfortunately, in the small hours, Mr Kennaway ran into Mr Kennedy's Daimler. Such was the "laid back" atmosphere, however, that no addresses were exchanged.

"It was great to see him in the pub," said Roger Blount, 64, owner of the Star Inn and, with appropriate incongruity, former mayor of Fowey in Cornwall.

"It's something for the local people," continues Mr Blount about the first eisteddfod fringe. "I think it's brilliant." He points out that few locals can afford the official event, its visitors don't go to the pub and the local magistrates won't allow them a licence extension (amazingly, they don't allow

one on St David's Day, either). And what does the official eisteddfod think of the newcomers? "We wish them well," says their president, former Plaid Cymru MP, Lord Elis-Thomas. "They are adding to the spirit of the town."

It may not have been the orthodox verdict desired by Dave Lee when he first asked Mr Kennaway if he could hold a rave on his land. But then, for Mr Lee, 35, it was all a bit much. His small townhouse was the fringe office, but also doubled as accommodation for the Screaming Finns.

"He had a bit of a breakdown at one point," says Mr Kennaway. No wonder. He had given them his bedroom and spent four days sleeping on his stairs.

No doubt the two ladies of Llangollen would have been agreeably scandalised by the whole crazy affair.



Sandpipers are happiest gliding around pebbly streams

Silver pipers call the tune

FROM MID-JULY, when passing a lake or pond, you may see a small brown bird with silvery underparts flicker away over the water with a thin triple call. This is the common sandpiper, a wader that breeds by pebbly streams or lochs, and is one of the first birds to return south when nesting is over.

FEATHER REPORT

William Wordsworth, that sharp-eyed naturalist, called it "the glancing sandpiper", and the adjective is very apt. For it skims over the water with a gliding motion broken by an occasional flick of the wings.

When it feeds at the edge of the water, running about picking up insects, it also has very distinctive movements, for it wags the rear part of its body up and down all the time.

In the nesting season, it is found mostly in the west and north of Britain, and it likes waters where a rocky shore is fringed by low grass or vegetation. Each pair makes a few scrapes in the pebbles, and the female finally chooses one and lays her four eggs in it.

They are arranged in the shape of a cross, and are buff or creamy with dark speckles, so they are hard to see among the stones. The parents, with their sand-coloured backs, are also very inconspicuous when they are sitting on the eggs. They defend territories of several hundred yards along the lake shores or along a stream, and the males make song flights over the water to advertise their possession of their stretch.

They have a light, trilling song that is little more than a development of their piping alarm call. Rival males sometimes confront each other on the shore, where they perform a "wing salute" display. They lift their long, narrow wings high above their backs, showing the bright undersides, then quickly close them again. A few salutes are often enough to send an intruding male on his way.

They like grass along the stony shore because it provides shelter for the young when they hatch. The parents lure their downy offspring away from the nest as soon as they are out of the egg and lead them into the vegetation.

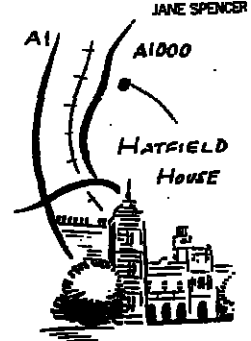
By now, a good many families are leaving their summer territories, giving people a chance to see them as they stop to feed and fatten up further south. A larger relative, the green sandpiper, has also started to come down from the Arctic. It is easily distinguished, because it resembles a large house martin with its black and white rump.

DERWENT MAY

● What's about: *Twitwachs*: laughing gull at Weymouth, Dorset; *Bulwer's petrel* at Selsey Bill, West Sussex; long-billed *Dowitcher* at Elmley, Kent. *Bridlers* watch for greenishants and spotted redshanks especially on coastal marshes. Details from *Birdline*, 0891 700222. Calls cost 50p a minute.

ON THE SPOT: HATFIELD HOUSE

The place: the privy garden, Hatfield House. The view: box-edged paths and trellises of lime. On one side is the Old Palace and on the other is Hatfield House. Historical interest: the 15th-century Old Palace was used by Henry VIII as a nursery for his children Mary Tudor and Elizabeth I. Hatfield House was built in 1610, but James I exchanged it for the home of Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. It has stayed in the Cecil family ever since. How to get there: take A1(M). The entrance is directly opposite Hatfield station. Best time to visit: during the summer months. OS ref: 227/085 on sheet 166. Also nearby: five miles of nature trails. The grounds and maze were used in the forthcoming film, *The Avengers*.



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سكوا من الاصل

When the new family 'pet' is a game old bird

We live on a shooting estate in Suffolk, and the woods around our cottage are occupied by pheasants — survivors of last winter's drives. The lawn has been claimed by a cock pheasant, bringing with him a harem of five hens to peck the grass and preen themselves.

Fraser Harrison made friends with a pheasant — and came to regret it

He is large and resplendent, his plumage at its most colourful and iridescent. He is also so tame he would walk into the oven if we tempted him with a trail of nuts.

A few weeks ago I hung a feeder for the tits on the wall of our patio and noticed that the pheasant regularly patrolled the ground below to scavenge. If I opened the sliding patio door, a heavy-glass affair which makes a grating noise, he retreated only a few yards.

I decided I would try to coax him to eat from my hand. In the event, this did not call for any great skill. Such was his greed that within four days he was fearlessly stabbing at my palm with the curved blade of his beak.

Whenever he saw me he would lower his brilliant, scarlet head and sprint towards me. He made a comical sight because when pheasants run their bodies remain level and steady, giving the impression that their legs are revolving like wheels.

My new relationship caused some anxiety within the house. Our dog, a moronic Labrador, once tried to chase him, but slipped on wet grass, nearly dislocating a back leg.

My wife decided to call the bird Rudolph, a name that suited him with its suggestion of sexual charisma and imperial decadence. The dog recovered but was left with a terror of these birds which used invisible powers to strike him down. Now, when the pheasant appears at the patio door

the poor dog leaves the room hurriedly.

On one occasion, as I was feeding him, Rudolph suddenly turned and ran, his head aloft, ferociously squawking. Seemingly through the back of his neck, he had seen a rival cock straying on to his territory. He expelled it with a single attack.

In the winter these cocks used to engage in ludicrous make-believe duels but now there are hens to safeguard, their bouts have given way to more brutal combats.

Recently, Rudolph suffered from a limp that caused him to rest his right foot every second or third step.

A gamekeeper told me that many of the cocks were in the same condition because they fight with their spurs, which become bruised. Sometimes he simply spreads his impressive feathers, leaning back on his heels and releases a king-of-the-castle crow. This is enough to scare off the moth-eaten and hopelessly celibate cock that lurks wistfully on his border.

Now and again I see Rudolph single out a hen. He follows her closely and when he has her attention spreads his tail and tilts it towards her, making it quiver hypnotically. At rest their tails appear to be a cluster of three or four feathers as long and slender as sword blades; erect, however, they turn out to comprise a whole fan which is beautifully ornamented with a pattern of black bars on a golden ground. After many exhibitions of this mar-

vel, the hen allows him to jump on her.

In his gluttony for nuts, Rudolph will leap on to my knee, but a pheasant's feet are designed for standing not gripping and he invariably falls off, ballooning his feathers to slow his descent.

To tell the truth, I have almost come to regret my "taming" of our pheasants because I cannot appear in the garden without being mobbed.

If I stand at the patio door, my mere silhouette brings them running to tap on the glass. The patio has to be regularly brushed clean of their pebbled droppings.

On the other hand, I have learnt from my intimacy with these creatures, which I had hitherto despised for their seeming stupidity, I had not realised that the hens' plumage, which appears at a distance to be an uninteresting speckled brown, in fact contains subtle glints and mother-of-pearl highlights.

Nor had I realised how vocal they are. We are familiar with their haunting "kuttuc, kuttuc" that rings through the autumn evenings, but I had not previously heard the soft, juvenile cheep made by the hens as they search for food.

Rudolph himself has several war cries and shouts of triumph, but mostly he maintains a companionable chirp, a rhythmic, unrolled squeaking in the back of his throat that can be heard wherever he is making his stately rounds.

I regret our intimacy for another reason. When a human being and a wild animal step out of their respective dimensions to fraternise, they meet in a place where the memory of ancient magic lingers; it is also a likely site of betrayal. Pheasants may behave as if they would happily exchange their liberty for the well-fed slavery of domestication, but the fact is they are game, not poultry, and any social involve-



Fraser Harrison may have Rudolph eating out of his hand but taming the bird could have serious consequences come the November shooting season

ment with them is fraught with deception. By winning Rudolph's trust, I have not made him a pet so much as an entertainer, a temporary member of the same glum profession as photographers' mon-

keys, dancing bears and lions that yawn while a trainer sticks his head between their jaws. These are animals whose instincts have been denatured; Rudolph's instincts are intact but easily suspended

by the narcotic of bird seed. However, the greatest deception is, of course, the one I practise on myself, since I like to think I have a special affinity with him that extends a little beyond the nuts in my hand.

By now the hens have retired to the undergrowth and are rearing their chicks. Under the protection of the gamekeeper, the chicks will lose their down, gain their adult feathers, fatten and

come November, make ripe targets for the guns. No doubt, the ripest will be Rudolph. A few will survive and next year there will be a new generation to feed but I suspect I won't be doing it again.

A VET WRITES

Q My son and family, plus 11-year-old Labrador have recently moved to Salisbury Plain. They love the wide open spaces, but the old dog is far from happy. He's frightened of the noises of army training. If gunfire starts, he trembles and doesn't want to move. Now he's reluctant to leave the garden and runs indoors whenever there's a loud bang. How can we help him?

A Your dog has to be persuaded that bangs and loud noises have pleasant associations, and most Labradors love their food. Tape the noisiest Westerns or Second World War TV dramas you can find and play them when it's feeding time — softly at first, increasing the volume over a period of weeks.

Carry a few tibbits with you when he's out for a walk so he can be given a tasty treat after each explosion. If someone with a "bomb-proof" dog could join you on your walks it would help your dog to gain confidence and he would learn by example. Patience, rather than comforting, is required. Labradors are gun dogs and it's not unreasonable to expect him to accept gunfire.

Q I have two lovely five-year-old tabby cats who insist on licking the fur away between their back legs. I do everything I can to keep them free from fleas and never find any flea droppings. My vet thinks they are allergic to something, but doesn't know what. Could it be their food?

A An allergic reaction to flea bites is one of the commonest causes of skin trouble in cats, but you appear to have eliminated this. Other allergies are unusual.

The photograph you enclosed shows a symmetrical baldness all over the lower end of the abdomen which resembles a condition called feline endocrine alopecia. Treatment using hormone tablets or injections is usually successful. But skin irritation and excessive licking are not normally part of this. I suggest you see your vet again. If things don't improve, ask him if he could arrange a second opinion from a veterinary dermatologist.

JAMES ALLCOCK

Write to the Times Vet. Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 6XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

MoD dogs and Englishmen

John Young sees a serious game of dogs and robbers

From within one of the huge, shabby, paint-flaking hangars at the former RAF Wethersfield in Essex comes a cacophony of excited barking. The summer breeze carries the sound out across the empty, silent runways which were built to launch giant American bombers during the Second World War.

Inside the hangar a dozen or so German shepherd dogs are being put through their paces. One of them bounds through the window of a temporarily erected wooden building to find and chase a burglar, another, undeterred by the deafening sound of a blank revolver bullet fired at close quarters, seizes the gunman by the arm until the police arrive to "arrest" him. Others race along obstacle courses, leaping over hurdles, scrambling up sloping platforms, burrowing through tunnels and charging unflinchingly through blazing hoops.

At the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) headquarters, opened in 1995, these dogs are training not just for official work, but in their new role as show dogs. This year, for the first time, a 22-strong team has been chosen to present the annual display of canine courage and discipline at the Royal Tournament, which opens at Earls Court, London, on Tuesday. The dogs and their handlers are trained at the Defence Animal Centre at



Sergeant Murray Simmonds with his dog, Quinn, sporting a surveillance camera

Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, where Inspector Tony Bailey, who formed the display team ten years ago, is assisted by three sergeants and a constable. About 80 dogs "graduate" every year, and there are now about 340 on active duty. For their human accomplices, courses range from two weeks for general protection duties to three months for working with "sniffer" dogs in detecting drugs and explosives.

All the dogs in the display team are normally employed on full operational duties. They and their handlers come from as far afield as Culrose, in Cornwall, and Couplport, on the Clyde, and, as well as their responsibility for security at defence establishments, they are sometimes called upon to

assist the local constabulary. Those chosen to display their skills at Earls Court have attended four special week-long training sessions in February, March, April and June, plus a final dress rehearsal in the arena itself. "We must bear in mind that we are there to entertain the public," Inspector Bailey says. "But basically the tasks we perform are those we carry out in ordinary training, like holding and detaining criminals coming at us with pistols or shotguns."

"The assault courses are to increase the dogs' courage and ability. But they must have the right temperament to begin with. They have got to be trustworthy and capable of switching on and off. From tearing a man's arm one minute to sitting down and allowing

themselves to be stroked the next. Also, coming from different parts of the country, they don't know each other and probably dislike and are suspicious of each other. They need to be trained to become friends and to work as a team."

One of the most experienced MDP handlers is Sgt Murray Simmonds, who has worked with dogs for 19 years at Netheravon, Boscombe Down, Bridgwater and Melton Mowbray. His dog, Quinn, is a Belgian shepherd, smaller than the German one, who was bred by a friend and whom he took on when his previous dog died.

Quinn is classed as a Tactical Firearms Support Dog, which means that he is trained to carry a remote control camera used in surveillance operations. If, for example, an armed criminal is thought to be hiding in a building, the dog is sent in first to transmit visual information to the surrounding marksmen. The camera is attached to a harness which fits over the dog's head and, using infra-red, it can transmit pictures over distances of up to a mile in open ground or 75 metres in built-up surroundings.

Gathered informally outside the hangar are most of the team who will be among the huge cast list at Earls Court next week. Dave Williams, a Welshman stationed at Corsham, in Wiltshire, confesses that he used to be frightened of dogs, and that he volunteered to train as a handler in order to conquer his fear.



Smart work: an MoD policewoman disarms a man after her dog has overpowered him



Leaping through rings of fire is one of many daring feats the dogs perform in the show

If fear sometimes has to be overcome, so too does occasional antipathy between man and beast. There are inevitably times during training when a dog will defy its handler. As Val Nixon, a Scotswoman from Couplport, puts it: "It becomes a battle of wills. One

or other of us has got to give." Behind the pageantry and spectacle of the Royal Tournament lies much skill and, yes, courage, too.

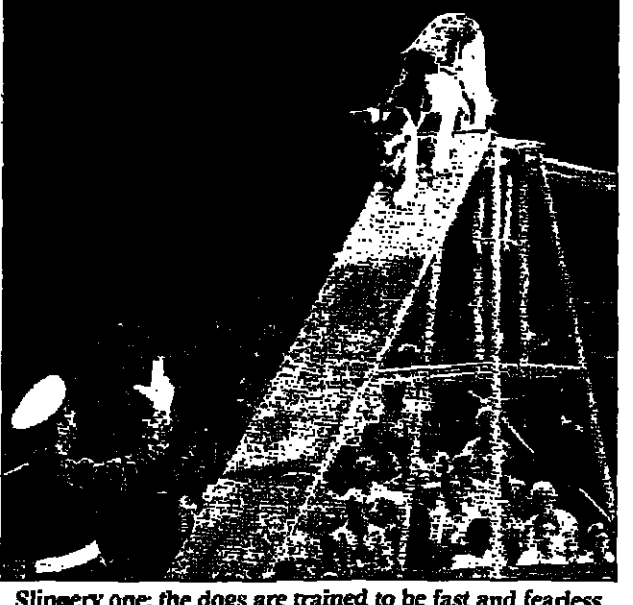
The MoD dogs can be seen at The Royal Tournament at Earls Court, London, from Tuesday until August 2 (0171-244 0244)

ADOPT ME



Beryl: a bit shy at first

BERYL is a three-year-old black female cat who was brought in to the Cats Protection League as a stray earlier this year. She is loving, affectionate and house-trained but shy of strangers. She would suit a home without children or other pets. If you would like to adopt Beryl, please contact the CPL in Dumstable (01525 240371).



Slingery one: the dogs are trained to be fast and fearless

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continued
from
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David Bowker takes on this week's challenge: playing it by the book in a quest for perfect etiquette

Manners maketh the man

Last week, someone at *The Times* forwarded a letter to me that was obviously intended for my fellow columnist John Morgan. It read: "I am writing to you on the vexatious topic of toothpicks. I often get food wedged between my teeth during meals. When eating alone, I rectify this problem with toothpicks and dental floss. But what to do at a dinner party?"

The letter was headed "Dear Sir", so I felt no qualms about replying. I wrote: "Dear Mr Mandelson, Frankly I'm shocked that you should even entertain the thought of flossing your teeth at a dinner party. What do you do for an encore? Pick your nose? You dirty devil."

Feeling it would be ill-mannered to append John Morgan's name to this letter, I signed myself "Yours faithfully, Smarty-Pants." But my attempt at anonymity failed. Two days later, Mr Mandelson sent me a terse note that read: "Oh, it's you is it? I've got a challenge for you, mate. Try being funny for a week."

At first, I thought my correspondent was being rude, but when I consulted *Debreit's New Guide to Etiquette* &

Modern Manners I realised that I had been in the wrong. First, I had penned my epistle in blue ink on cheap paper, a double *faux pas*. Gentlemen always use the best paper they can afford, and blue ink is mainly used by women. Which makes me a big soft skinned.

My main blunder was to call my correspondent a "dirty devil". According to *Debreit's*, "everyone deserves kindness and respect". This was certainly news to me. Chastened, I spent the next seven days trying to rectify the matter.

On Tuesday morning, I awoke and worried about whether there was a wrong and right side to get out of bed. I consulted *Debreit's*, but found nothing under "bed, getting out of". Rather than risk starting the day incorrectly, I rolled about wildly until I fell out of bed, freeing myself of any culpability in the matter.

During breakfast, I swotted up on

etiquette and found that I had been living a disgraceful life. While being aware that it is gauche to slurp one's tea or to fill a wine glass more than two-thirds full, I was surprised to learn that it is bad form to describe a duchess as "dead" before her funeral. Nor is it acceptable to shout out "knickers!" at a state banquet.

My neighbour Ted was having problems at work and came round to ask for advice. He had offended his employer and was in imminent danger of losing his job. Should he beg for forgiveness? I quoted *Debreit's*, which advises that it is undignified to grovel. A day later, Ted

SEVEN LONG DAYS



came round in tears. Because of his failure to grovel, his boss had sacked him. Ted seemed to think that this was all my fault. Politely, I asked him to leave.

On Wednesday, I had lunch with an incorrigible name-dropper. *Debreit's* states that people who refer to "Liz and Michelle" when they mean Elizabeth Taylor and Michelle Pfeiffer are guilty of "minor bad manners". The best response is to repeatedly and pointedly ask: "Liz who?"

So when the name-dropper said: "I was playing pool with Elton, when Mick walked up to me and accused me of

spilling his pint", I said: "Liz who? Liz who?" This shut him up in no time.

An entire chapter in *Debreit's New Guide to Poshness* is devoted to the "New Relationship With Domestic Staff". I didn't realise that I had any staff, until finding a perfect description of my wife under the heading of "Housekeeper".

I call my wife Jane, which is lucky because a) it's her name and b) the tradition of addressing staff by their surnames is now obsolete. While watching TV, I said: "Make me a cup of tea, Jane." She then broke with protocol by replying: "Make it yourself, you lazy git."

The next day, I was reading quietly when I heard a loud knock on the door. Then someone shouted, "Come out here, you swine! I lost my job because of you." It was Ted. He'd obviously been drinking. Under the circumstances, I did the only polite thing. I hid behind the sofa.



WEEKEND COURSES

JULY 21-AUGUST 2

Historic gardens of Bath. Stonehenge revisited. At Urchfont Manor College, Devizes, Wiltshire (01380 840495). Price, from £104 residential.

History in action: a survey of English history from Saxon times. At Kirby Hall, Corby, Northants, with English Heritage (0171-973 3434). Price for two days, family admission, £34.

Diving the Skomer marine reserve and the Pembrokeshire Islands. With the Field Studies Centre, Dale Fort, Haverfordwest (01646 636205). Price, £204 residential, £160 non-residential.

Summer birdwatching: Making your camera work for you. At the Field Studies Council Centre, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex (01206 298283). Price per course, £140 residential, £110 non-residential.

An inordinate fondness for beetles: Look out for mammals: an identification workshop: Roman Shropshire. At the Field Studies Council Centre, Preston Montford, Shrewsbury (01743 850380). Price, from £90-£115 residential, £50-£85 non-residential.

Making sense of modern art: The environmental heritage of Bedfordshire. At the Maryland College, Woburn, Bedfordshire (01525 292901). Price, £99 residential.

Life and art in 18th-century England; Tai Chi Chuan; A painting course. At the Old Rectory,

Fittleworth, near Pulborough, West Sussex (01798 865306). Price, £114 residential, £90 non-residential.

To win a war? The German offensives on the Western Front in the spring and summer of 1918 — an 80th anniversary appraisal. At the University of Birmingham, Dept of Continuing Studies, Edgbaston (0121-414 5615). Price, £125.

Lace-making for beginners: Watercolours for beginners. At the Knuston Hall Residential College, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northants (01933 312104). Price, £92.

The road to Santiago and Muslim Spain; Nineteenth-century writing: Archaeological techniques for local historians: The symphonic poem in theory and practice. At the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price, £120.

Canoe trips in the Scottish Highlands. Round Fort William and Fort Augustus in the Great Glen. With Scottish Voyagers (01651 851215). Price, £135 all inclusive.

Learn to smoke salmon, trout, pork and haggis. At the Tweed Valley Hotel, Walkerburn, Peeblesshire (01896 870636). Price, £149.

AUGUST 2-4

A banjo weekend. At the Benslow Music Trust, Hitchin, Herts (01462 459446). Price, £105 residential, £85 non-residential.

Mosaic art summer school. At Daedalian Glass, Poulton-le-Fyde, Lancs (01253 702531). Price, £211.



A head made from coat hangers by David Mach — make sense of modern art in Woburn next month

Hand-building with clay: The techniques of designing decorated pots: A stained glass workshop. At Creative Courses, Barham Farmhouse, East Hoothly, Lewes, East Sussex (01825 841464). Price, £100.

Folk summer school: Spanish literature; Embroidery; Silver-smithing and jewellery making. At the Knuston Hall Residential College, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northants (01933 312104). Price, £92.

Wildlife television: an insider's story; English parish churches. At

the Maryland College, Woburn, Beds (01525 292901). Price, £99.

Map and compass work for walkers: Wine appreciation; Oriental dancing: A painting course. At the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, Pulborough, West Sussex (01798 865306). Price, £114 residential, £90 non-residential.

Fly-fishing courses in Hampshire. With Fishing Breaks (0171-359 8818). Day, £99, weekend, £159.

Trends in domestic architecture: The portrait in the Italian Renaissance; Japanese architecture.

gardens and the tea culture. At the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price, £120.

Hang gliding. At the YHA Centre, Edale, Derbyshire (01433 670302). Price, £172.

Investigating crop circles: Decorative folk art. At Urchfont Manor College, Devizes, Wiltshire (01380 840495). Price, from £99.

Walking back in time: a history through the landscape. At the Field Studies Council Centre, Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex (01206 298283). Price, £140

residential, £110 non-residential.

Otters. At the Preston Montford Field Studies Centre, Shrewsbury, Salop (01743 850380). Price, £135 residential, £100 non-residential.

Family activities: Dugby sailing, canoeing, surfing, rafting, abseiling. At the Skern Lodge Centre, Appledore, Bideford, Devon (01237 475992). Children from age seven, fully qualified staff. Price, £100.

Conservation activities in all parts of Britain. With the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (01491 839766). Price per three-day weekend, £100.

Cabinet making: Caring for furniture; Gardening, the mixed border. At the West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 811301). Price, £156 inclusive.

Future world: the energy question. At the Field Studies Council Centre, Betws-y-Coed, Wales (01690 710494). Price, £122 residential, £100 non-residential.

Let's play jazz: Clothes making: The video camcorder: Mixed lace for all. At the Knuston Hall Residential College, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northants (01933 312104). Price, £92 inclusive.

Beethoven's piano sonatas; Hidden voices: Pen-and-ink drawing techniques. At the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price, £120.

Walking in Constable country;

New directions in watercolour painting: Painting flowers and trees in a garden setting. At the Field Studies Council Centre, Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex (01206 298283). Price per course, £140 residential, £110 non-residential.

Outdoor activities, walking, climbing, abseiling, and much more. With Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083). Price, from £56 all inclusive.

Hang gliding in North Yorkshire. With Active Edge of Harrogate (01423 711900). All equipment provided. Two-day course, £110.

Paragliding. With the Northern Paragliding Centre, Hawes, Wensleydale (01759 304404). All equipment provided. Weekend course, £120.

Microlight flying. At Rufforth Airfield East, Rufforth, York (01904 738877). Age 16-plus. BMAA recognised. Trial lesson, £35. Four-day courses, £495.

Dinghy sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, powerboating. At the Grafton Water Centre, Perry, Huntingdon, Cambs (01480 810521). Price, weekend from £69.

Parachuting courses. With the Wild Geese Skydiving Centre, Colrairie, Northern Ireland (012665 58609). Price, £120.

Summer flowers of South Devon. At the Slatton Ley Field Centre, Kingsbridge, Devon (01548 580466). Price, £135 residential, £101 non-residential.

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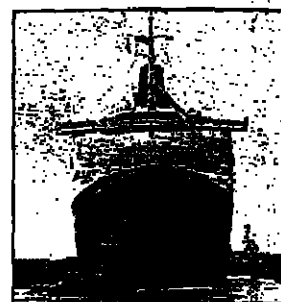
How to survive the theme parks

Disney's world • 24 & 25

TRAVEL

Britannia — a new sister for QE2?

Ruling the waves • 30



The sharks are not only in the water

There is a madness that comes with making the acquaintance of a Great White shark. How bad would it be to be eaten alive? How much could it really hurt?

Soon you become less vigilant. You climb down the ladder into the cage, with only the ocean beneath you, experimentally gripping the rungs with one hand instead of two. You lean on railings, confident they will not give way. A short distance away the ocean's foremost predator wrestles with a slab of meat.

Shark-cage diving has boomed in South Africa since the establishment of the new republic in 1994. The country has a population of Great Whites which attract thousands of adventure travellers every year. It is possible to encounter the species in Australia but the distance involved and the elusiveness of the sharks send costs soaring.

There are no such problems in South Africa. About 2,000 Great Whites patrol the coastline between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, and for as little as £60 you can take a day-trip to one of the seal colonies where they feed.

However, recently fears have been raised about the safety of tourist boat rides and shark-cage diving. There have been allegations about greedy and incompetent operators, which prompted the South African Government to introduce a code of conduct last month.

There has also been a spate of accidents within the past two months, although these have involved body-boarders, not cage divers. In addition, a ten-year-old boy was saved from a mauling when his father grabbed the shark in a bear-hug.

The Cape Town-based White Shark Research Institute is leading the attempt to bring unscrupulous cage-diver operators to account. Theo Ferreira, its 49-year-old founder, says: "Commercial operators are playing Russian roulette with unsuspecting clients. We are angry because shark tour-

A new thrill is gripping South Africa but, as Chris Hulme finds out, it is not without risks

ism has the potential to be the cornerstone of this country's efforts to attract visitors, and should have a value educating people about the role these predators play in nature.

"Instead it's just an embarrassment to South Africa. The whole business is an accident waiting to happen."

Captain Emilio DeSousa, a marine inspector at the transport department, admits there have been problems. His office has fined and warned several companies, mostly for overcrowding boats.

Herman Ousthusin, spokesman for the fisheries department, adds: "We're concerned because some boat owners are not looking after their equipment properly and they don't always have qualified dive masters on board."

"We'd like to make sure the crews have trauma training, access to shark attack kits and links with rescue helicopters. At the moment, if someone is bitten the boat would have to bring them back to shore and the crew find a doctor." By which time, he admits, the casualty may have bled to death.

The WSRI believes there is a safe and eco-friendly way of encountering the species. It pioneered the use of the circular cage, which has no sharp edges to harm the sharks. The cage, a cylinder about three metres tall, floats free, just under the surface, attached by two ropes to the boat.

When the sharks make contact, the cage moves and twists like an elusive boxer. If a shark becomes entangled, the ropes are cut, allowing the creature to roll away free. The cage, which contains flotation tanks, then bobs in the water.

The epicentre of shark tourism is Gansbaai, a two-hour drive from Cape Town. A couple of years ago it was ignored by guidebooks. Now hotels, guesthouses and restaurants are springing up.

Tourists head for Dyer Island — home to thousands of fur seals. They spread across two sections of land and the channel of water in between is called shark alley.

The most spectacular attacks are from below. To watch a Great White explode out of the water like a missile, grabbing a seal with one awesome bite, is usually enough to dent the confidence of those revellers contemplating climbing into the cage.

Duncan Head, spokesman for Cape Nature Conservation, wants access restricted by permits. "We're concerned about the competition between operators," he says. "There have been up to ten boats in the channel which means about 100 people within metres of Dyer Island. We're worried boats might bump into each other and sink."

The prospect of government intervention is a minor concern for the five operators who dominate the market. They include Jackie Smit, a retired electronics engineer who owns Southcoast Seafaris, and who was shot last year while he was standing on his boat in Gansbaai harbour.

Mr Smit, who claims to take out 1,000 tourists a year, which would make him the busiest operator, laughs when asked if someone was trying to kill him. What is apparent is that he has a talent for controversy. Last August he was asked to resign as chairman of the White Shark Association, a local trade group. He was accused of unfairly using his position to attract customers.

Tommy Roberts, a builder, runs one of the smallest concerns. He has been widely criticised for using pig heads as bait — a disgusting spectacle, hardly likely to captivate ecotourists. He takes out his own customers, but also rents his boat to rival operators.

Andre Hartman, a former fisherman, is infamous for using a cage with no lid. A shark could enter from the surface without much difficulty. However, it is Mr Smit who has attracted the closest attention of the authorities. His business practices have been the subject of a number of allegations relating to the seaworthiness of his boat. He strongly denies suggestions that he has taken out tourists in bad weather.

Mr Smit does admit to taking out tourists in an unregistered fishing boat in 1994. "An innocent mistake, which I corrected once I discovered that this was prohibited," he says. "He was found guilty of operating a boat without a safety certificate last August. 'I am not working in the shark-cage industry because I want to make money out of it,' he insists. 'I haven't earned a cent.'"

Despite the fears, I finally found the resolve to encounter the real thing. Within about a minute of entering the water for my first cage dive with the WSRI, a 4m-long female white shark arrived to check out the cage.

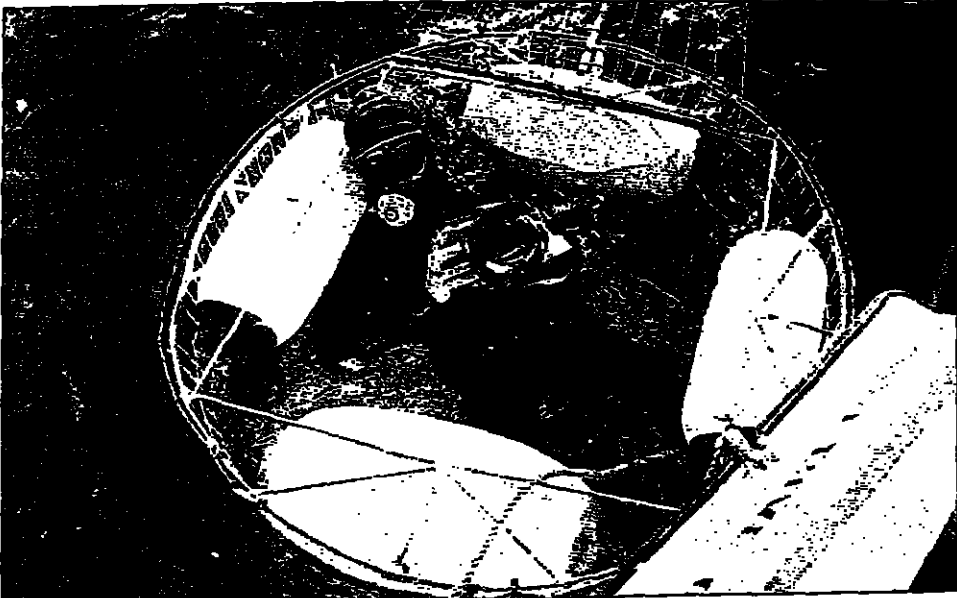
We regarded each other in the silence. Her mouth was slightly agape — the famous maniacal grin. The one eye I could see was an intense pool of black. On a later dive, bait was suspended above my cage. A 3m-long male made one run after another, opening his jaws so wide each time I thought he would surely dislocate them, but he pulled out at the last moment, unconvincing.

He then headed towards my cage. I crouched on the bottom. There was a gap near the top, large enough to allow unobstructed views underwater, but small enough to prevent sharks entering all the way. The shark poked his head inside. His jaws snapped at some particles of bait drifting down from the surface. When the bait floated out of reach, he swung his head out of the enclosure. It was an awesome and intimidating spectacle — but not frightening.

Waiting to be pulled back to the boat, I recalled the words of Theo Ferreira. "I often think about how degrading it is — for the shark," he had said. "These operators encourage people to gawk and shout. The king of the ocean is turned into a joke. When they have a good day, you see them strutting around as if they are the stars. Without the Great White they would be nothing. They don't deserve its presence."



The sight of a Great White shark exploding out of the water is enough to make even the hardened thrill-seeker think twice about cage-diving

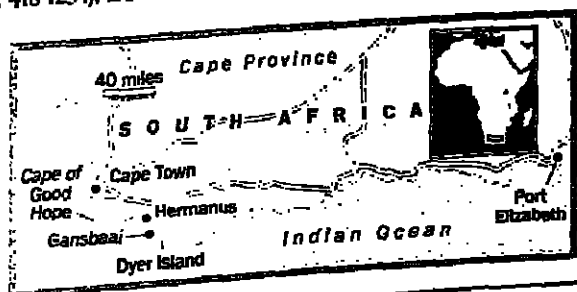


Circular cages are believed to be a safe and eco-friendly way of encountering the species

SHARK FACT BOX

- Chris Hulme bought his package from the White Shark Research Institute, PO Box 50775, V&A Waterfront, 8000 Cape Town, South Africa (00 27 21 557 028). A ten-day shark diving package in Gansbaai costs £996, including diving equipment, meals, guesthouse accommodation and a transfer from Cape Town. Flights are not included.
- Getting there: South African Airways (0171-312 5000) flies to Cape Town from Heathrow; prices start at £597. British Airways (0345 222111) also flies to Cape Town. Charter operator Bluebird (0990 320000) flies to Cape Town from £469 from December 2 until March 16, 1999.
- Accommodation in Cape Town: Mount Nelson (0151-568 8366); double rooms start at £1,670 (£163), including breakfast. Victoria Junction (0027 21 418 1234); from R750 (£73).
- Diving tips: Take sea-sickness pills, sunglasses and bottled water. Do not get on an overcrowded boat. If the facilities seem too basic (for example, no dive

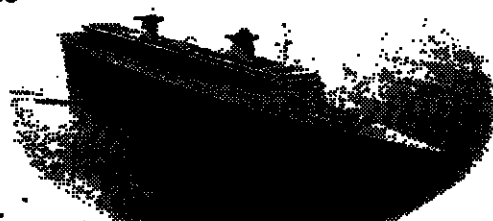
- platform or toilet) it is best to walk away. Dive Master (01702 476902) specialises in diving insurance in the area.
- If you want to dive in a cage with the WSRI, you will need to have completed a PADI open-water course or a British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) sports diver course or equivalent. Contact: PADI (0117-971 1777); BSAC (0151-350 6200).
- Red tape: no visa or vaccinations required.
- Tour operators to South Africa include: Africa Exclusive (01604 628979), Art of Travel (0171-738 2038), Cox & Kings (0171-873 5000), (0171-738 2038), Cox & Kings (0171-873 5000), South African Affairs (0181-423 3000), South African Holidays (0171-381 5222) and Tailor Made Holidays (0171-591 0300).
- Further information: South African Tourist Board (0181-944 8080).
- Reading: South Africa Handbook (Footprint, £14.99) and Cape Town (Lonely Planet, £5.95).



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- 24 September Monte Carlo/Nice (Villefranche)
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All the fun of the fair at Disneyland Paris — but it is several years since any serious money was invested in the park and visitors may soon be tempted to try other European theme parks instead



Disneyland's Central Plaza

FACT FILE

David Churchill travelled with Eurostar and stayed at Disneyland Paris.

Getting there: Eurostar (0990 186186) has a direct service to Disneyland Paris from Waterloo. The journey takes about three hours; return fares are from £89 for an adult and £54 for a child. The train arrives at about 1.30pm, so you can have an afternoon, an evening, and the following day with a return service at 7.30pm. Getting to the park from Paris is also easy on fast RER trains. Paris Travel Service (01992 456100) offers a two-night midweek package in August for two adults and two children under 11 travelling on Eurostar and staying in a family room at the three-star Sequoia Lodge. The total price is £906, including a three-day ticket to the park for the family.

Other operators include: Bridge Travel Service (01992 456045), Cresta Holidays (0161-953 2011), Leger Coach Holidays (01709 839839).

Tickets: One-day admission costs £21; children three to 11 inclusive, £16. "Starry Nights" tickets are available after 6pm for entry until 11pm for £9.80 for both adults and children until August 31. Disneyland Paris direct booking service (0990 030303).

Is Disneyland Paris worth a visit?

There have been no major new rides for three years, but, says David Churchill, Disneyland Paris still offers a magical experience for families

It has not been well with Mickey Mouse and his pals in Europe recently. During the past few weeks, visitors to Disneyland Paris have had the unusual and unsettling experience of having to pass through a picket line of disgruntled employees who, in normal circumstances, would be dressed as Snow White and Mickey Mouse and taking part in parades and shows.

Although the dispute was resolved a week ago, the strikes are a clear sign that money remains tight at the theme park six years after it opened. The most startling indication of this is that the last time Disneyland Paris opened an important new attraction — Space Mountain — was three years ago. While visitors to British

theme parks have been able to enjoy the latest "white-knuckle" technology (Oblivion and Ripsaw at Alton Towers, for example, which both opened in the past year), visitors to the Paris park have had to make do with rather tamer alternatives.

I also believe that the quality of the infrastructure in Paris is not matched by the level of service. For example, there is noticeably more litter in Disneyland Paris than at the Orlando park. I have visited Walt Disney World in Florida on Independence Day — its busiest time of the year — and it was extraordinarily tidy.

However, although a Disney World holiday in Florida is something special, after 16 visits to the Paris park I still think its convenience and key

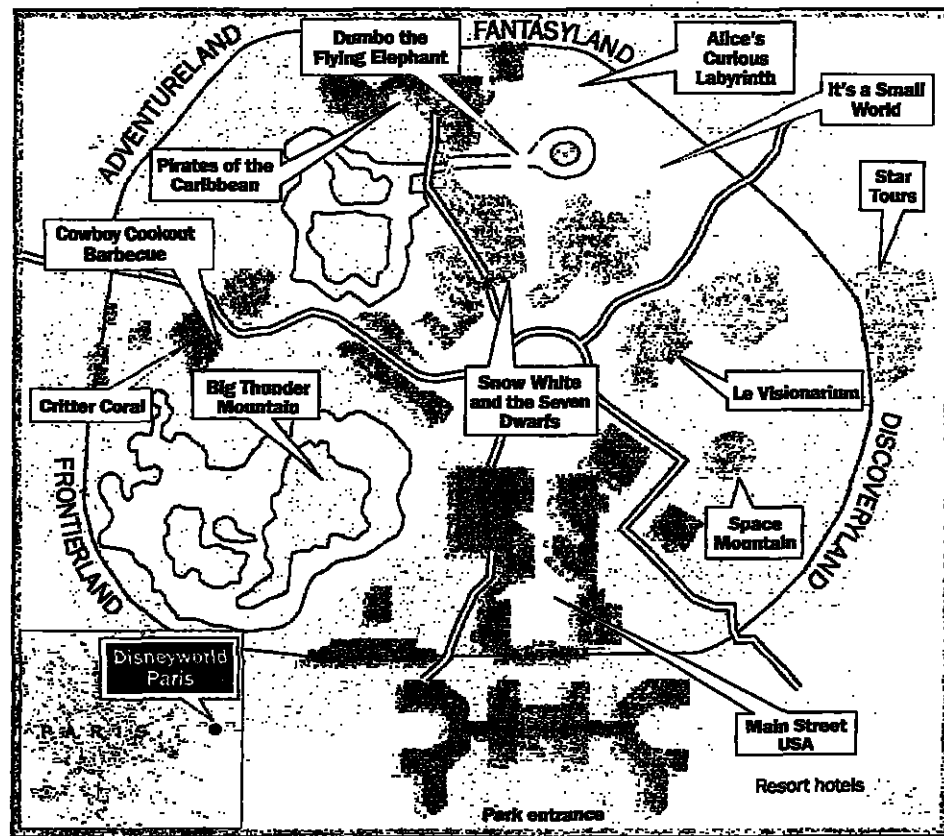
attractions make it worth more than one trip.

Big Thunder Mountain and Space Mountain are excellent rollercoasters — better than their Walt Disney World counterparts — and yet there is much more to see and do in the park than just the thrill-rides. Children always love to see the Disney characters and, without having to fork out for transatlantic flights, the best places to spot them are at the end of Main Street at Casey's Corner every morning, or on the Castle Stage in Fantasyland.

There are all sorts of tricks for getting the best out of the Paris park (see right). Most involve avoiding queues: for example, when Merlin starts his "sword in the stone" routine at the back of Sleeping Beauty's Castle, the queues for the nearby Snow White and Pinocchio rides immediately shrink — it is worth taking this opportunity to go on these rides. Parents with young children should beware of the Snow White ride: the frequent appearances of the wicked witch make it scarier than anything else in the park.

However, there are plenty of charming experiences. Altogether, there are about 40 rides, ranging from an Alice in Wonderland maze to the Critter Corral, where small animals can be petted. The Visionarium 360-degree Circlevision film offers a panoramic view of Europe through a clever time-travel story so successful that it now also appears at Walt Disney World in Florida.

With limited resources for new attractions, the Disney management in Paris has special themed events, such as a recent Flower Festival (Disney's equivalent of the Chelsea Flower Show) and a Bonfire



SURVIVING DISNEYLAND PARIS

Go early. On arrival, head straight for the attraction you most want to see. Experience suggests that Big Thunder Mountain draws the early crowds while Space Mountain gets fewer people early on. You can probably get straight on to the Indiana Jones rollercoaster in Adventureland. Big Thunder has a lower height restriction, 102cm compared with 140cm on the Space Mountain and Indiana Jones rollercoaster — so gets bigger queues.

If you stay in a Disney resort hotel, you can get into the park from 8am by showing your pink hotel ID at the turnstiles (along with a ticket). Frontierland is the only area open at this time, but you can get on Big Thunder and have breakfast afterwards at the Cowboy Cookout.

Go late. Many visitors, especially those with young children, leave the park in the early evening, shrinking the queues at most attractions.

Be contrary. Do the opposite of what you think others will do. For example, most people head left when they enter the park and end up in Frontierland which has the longest queues. Keep to the right instead and go to Discoveryland for Space Mountain and other rides. Also, when the big parades take place, the queues will generally be smaller for most attractions.

Plan your itinerary. Unfortunately there is no decent guidebook to the park that you can buy in advance, but on arrival head for City Hall and pick up a park guide. Dumbo the Flying Elephant, for example, is a slow-loading attraction and collects long queues, so head for it first if it is a "must-do". There is also a guide to waiting times at the Tip Board on the right at the end of Main Street, which indicates where queues are shortest, although experience shows that by the time you reach the ride the position can change drastically.

What to do on a day trip:

Arrive early. As the car park is some distance away, allow at least half an hour to get from the car, buy tickets and get in for a 9am opening.

Unless you are planning to stay late, head for the Big Thunder Mountain rollercoaster, grit your teeth and be prepared to queue (up to an hour). Then head for Space Mountain. Forget the Indiana Jones rollercoaster unless you are a coaster freak, as this is not an original Disney ride. Other "must-see" attractions for those in a rush are:

Pirates of the Caribbean (a boat ride through pirate-infested waters), **Phantom Manor** (scary for children), **It's a Small World** (irritating theme tune but perfect for small children), and **Star Tours** (simulator ride based on Star Wars). If visiting before August 16, then check out the Michael Jackson 3-D film, **Captain EO**, as it will not be shown in any Disney parks after this date.

"Minor league" attractions include the Disneyland Railroad, a riverboat cruise on the **Mark Twain** or **Molly Brown** paddle-steamers, Peter Pan's **Flight and Le Visionarium**, the 360 degree **Circlevision** film.

Don't forget the parades and shows that take place at various times and locations. These are excellent productions and popular details and timings on the Park Guide leaflet. Also, **Videopolis** in Discoveryland is a huge indoor theatre next to a burger bar. The **Menu Donald** — a clone of the popular American burger chain — offers a double cheeseburger, small fries and soft drink for £3.50. Budget tips:

Don't stay in a Disney hotel — accommodation outside the park is cheaper.

Best value admission ticket until the end of August is the "Starry Nights" passport for £9.80 for adults and children.

Continued on page 25

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Bonanza (November 2-7) aimed at the British market. The entertainment and restaurant complex has also been revamped and renamed the Disney Villages with the largest Planet Hollywood restaurant outside North America and a multi-screen cinema complex (most films are dubbed into French). The Buffalo Bill rodeo show is fun, but the food is exorbitant — more than £100 for two adults and two children under 11.

It can be a bit of a push, but most of the key attractions can still be seen in a day. Staying overnight in a Disney hotel is fun because of the excellent theming — the budget-priced Hotel Cheyenne is like a scene from a western town, while the Davy Crockett ranch consists of log-style cabins and an animal enclosure, swimming pool and nature trails.

Where Disneyland Paris goes next is not so clear. The American parent company



Goofy takes a well-deserved break from the hectic parades

want to repeat their trips before being lured away to other theme parks: Futuroscope, near Poitiers; Movie World near Essen in Germany; or the soon-to-be-revamped Port Aventura near Barcelona in Spain, which will become a Universal Studios park.

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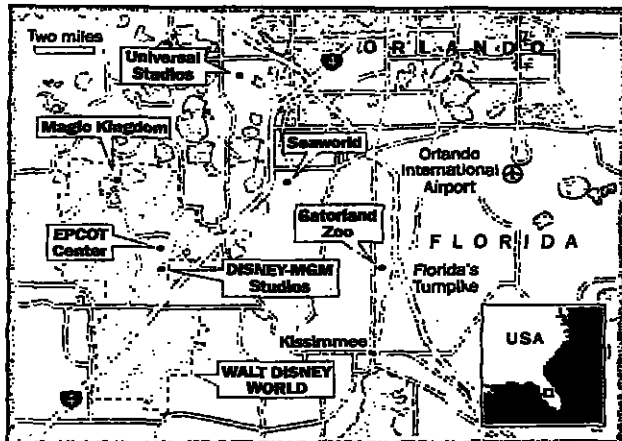
THEME PARKS: HOW TO BEAT THE CROWDS

Orlando's magic takes planning

JAMES MORGAN



Minnie Mouse on parade at Disneyland Paris



Thinking of treating the kids to Florida's theme parks? Then take Stephanie Davies's advice

Thousands of British families are about to fly out to the theme parks of Florida for their summer breaks, despite the bad press the state has had this week. Many parents will be wondering just how they can stay sane while ensuring that their children have the holiday of a lifetime.

Added to which, July and August are the hottest months of the year in Florida. You should be prepared for temperatures in the sweltering 30s, and hot, sweaty, noisy queues. Many of the visitors at this time of year are Britons or Brazilians: we do not realise that this is the most tortuous time to visit, and they are used to the heat. Few Americans visit during the summer, preferring winter temperatures.

Fortunately, there are ways of ensuring that the experience is tolerable for both grown-ups and kids — it just requires advance knowledge, planning and military-style organisation. Here are our tips to surviving Orlando's theme parks:

1. Arrange your trips to the theme parks to alternate with days doing less hectic things such as sunbathing or shopping. You could drive to Daytona Beach (one hour away) or travel one-and-a-half hours to Clearwater Beach.
2. It rains in Florida. In summer, bank on a short downpour almost every day for about half an hour. Rain ponchos are essential. You can buy them for about £4 each at the big attractions: everybody wears them and they are light to carry.
3. Buy a guidebook that details rides and maps (see below). These are available both in Orlando and here in Britain.
4. Take snacks and drinks to keep your children happy while they queue. The waiting time given on the boards is generally accurate. Even if the queue looks short, do not be fooled. Just as you get around the corner you often find several hundred people tucked away.
5. At least one of the party should carry a backpack, and the others waistpacks. A bottle of water in the backpack can be refilled from the numerous drinking fountains.
6. Try to arrive as early as possible. If you are late one morning, don't panic — just adjust your plan accordingly. If, for example, you arrive at 9.45am, just start with your third ride and leave the first two for another occasion, or later in the evening when crowds have thinned. Certain days are quieter than others, and this varies from park to park and time of year.
7. Those who stay at a Disney hotel have early opening privileges. On certain days the park will open for them an hour or so early. If you are not staying at a Disney hotel, avoid these days at all costs — your own plan won't work if the park is already full of Disney guests when you arrive, and your early rising will be wasted. Call when you arrive in Orlando to find out which are the early opening days for the three Disney parks.
8. You need about two days to see Epcot, but only a day if you have children under ten. This futuristic park is regarded as the more intellectual, educational end of Disney, aimed at older children and adults. For the Magic Kingdom, arrive an hour earlier than you would allow for other parks.
9. Unlike other attractions, and unlike Disneyland in California, there is a two-tiered entry. After parking the car, you take a trolley car to the holding area. You then have to queue up to get on a monorail or a steamboat to take you to the gates of the Magic Kingdom Park. If you can get on to a monorail quickly, that is faster than the steamboat. If, however, the crush is so much that you would have to wait for two or three trains, the steamboat is faster.

Continued from page 24
 (A normal one-day pass costs £21 for adults, £16 for children.) Only available after 6pm but gives you five hours to see the attractions, including the Electric Light Parade and the new Fantasy in the Sky fireworks show at 10.30pm.
 Although you are not meant to take your own food into the park, nobody is likely to stop you. Officially, there is a picnic area outside the park entrance for eating. Use a cool-bag and leave the food and drinks in a locker, available for £1 immediately inside the theme park. There are also water fountains around the park, so you can avoid spending £1.55 for a soft drink.
 The Au Chalet de la Marionette restaurant in Fantasyland has the cheapest hamburgers (93p); chips cost £1.13 and a soft drink is 93p.
 Set a budget limit for souvenirs. There is a gift shop at the exit of almost every ride. Make it a game to find cheap but good value souvenirs.

Other tips for a good time:
 Cheapest may not always be the best when choosing a hotel. The Hotel Cheyenne and the Hotel Santa Fe are budget priced, but the fairly small rooms lack air-conditioning and the hotels do not have their own swimming pools. The Sequoia Lodge, Newport Bay Club, Hotel New York and the (very expensive) Disneyland Hotel have air-conditioning and their own swimming pools. A night's B&B ranges from £148 to £252, based on two adults sharing.
 France may be the home of grand cuisine, but the food at Disneyland Paris is generally mediocre and expensive for what it is. "Character breakfasts" — when Disney characters join you for the meal — may sound fun, but it will cost two adults and two children under 11 about £40.
 Don't worry if it rains: much of Main Street is under cover and many of the rides are indoors as well. Buy a yellow plastic rain cape with Mickey Mouse on it for £4.



The Magic Castle in Florida's Disney World. The crowds are big and the weather hot, but it can be a great holiday



The dolphin show at Seaworld, Orlando, is popular

10. MGM Studios is a shorter day. If you have been to Disneyland in California, you will notice that a few of the attractions in the one park there have been spread over two here.
 11. Universal Studios is smaller and less daunting than the Disney parks and getting there early really pays off. You can have experienced most of the big rides by mid-morning. And the heat of the day can be spent viewing the air-conditioned theatre shows.
 12. Gatorland is a good half-day — a wise choice for the first afternoon when you are still recovering from jet lag. Or if you have an early evening flight home it would pass those final hours.
 13. You should also arrive early at the water parks. By mid-morning the queues for the slides and flumes can be more than an hour long. The

Disney water parks Blizzard Beach and Typhoon Lagoon may close the gates by lunchtime in peak season if they are full. Monday is the quietest day for water park trips.
 14. Don't bother queuing for the lockers — there is a rush to find the best spots when the parks open, so take a cheap towel and book your loungers, then one of the group carries all valuables and obtains a locker while the others rush to the slides.
 15. Don't plan your sunbathing for the Disney water parks unless you like sitting in an upmarket gritty storm drain. You are far better off staying by your resort pool for swimming and sunbathing. The Typhoon Lagoon main pool gets so unpleasantly crowded in high season that all you can do is jump up and down with the surf-machine, as there is no room to swim. Go early to ride the slides.

BUYING YOUR TICKET TO RIDE

- You can travel to Orlando with British Airways Holidays (0870 2412412). A seven-night fly/drive package to Orlando, including return flights from Gatwick, UK taxes and car hire, starts at £499 per adult and £319 per child. The same package with seven nights' accommodation at The Gateway Inn starts at £605 per adult and £319 per child. Valid August 17-31; departs Tuesdays to Sundays.
- Florida Vacations (01727 941568) has villas in Kissimmee, near Orlando. Return flights from Heathrow, Gatwick or Manchester, taxes, car hire and seven nights' accommodation starts at £699 per person based on four sharing up to August 31, and £579 from September 1 to October 31. Children travel for £60 less than the adult price; departs daily.
- From September 1 to October 31, Virgin Holidays (01293 617181) is offering seven nights' accommodation in Kissimmee, daily return flights from Gatwick or Manchester, taxes, car hire or transfers from £539 per person; children under 12 travel for 50 per cent less.

16. Wear comfortable trainers or shoes. Don't try to break in a new pair. Do visit the factory outlet shoe stores where you can buy branded trainers much cheaper than in Britain — for breaking in back home.
 17. Check height restrictions before choosing your park otherwise one of you will be left behind minding a short, disappointed child while the rest of the family queues and goes on the ride. Many of the faster rides are not suitable for children under seven.
 Recommended reading: *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World*, by Bob Schlinger (in the Frommer's Unofficial Guides series, published by Macmillan US, £10.99). *A Brit's Guide to Orlando and Walt Disney World*, by Simon Veness (Fountain, £9.99).

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Model museum for modern Japan.



An exhibition of traditional Japanese dress at the Edo-Tokyo Museum, the Japanese capital's stunning museum

It is difficult to impress architectural in Tokyo. For competition, there are the sleek skyscrapers of Shinjuku, space-age developments on Tokyo Bay and — right in the heart of town — the glorious, soaring glass canopy of the new Tokyo International Forum building. The greatest construction gesture in this packed city is the prodigious use of space — and in this the Edo-Tokyo Museum excels.

Edo was the city's name before it was renamed Tokyo (Eastern Capital) and the museum sets out to explore its development from medieval to modern entity. While the ancient Japanese capital of Kyoto occupied the cultural high ground, Edo was bursting with energy and commerce, and the curators decided to create a walk-through display, over several floors, that would take the visitor on a chronological journey through its evolution. The architect Kikutake Kiyonori designed an extraordinary-looking building: a concrete bunker on four stiff legs which is entered, spaceship-like, via a long escalator. The whole thing looks like a mechanical monster in *Star Wars*, although it is meant to resemble a traditional farm building. Below ground, through funky circular doors, are audiovisual archives, the museum shop and an area where you can ask for a free English-speaking guide — usually a student — for company.

Out in the open, on the third floor, the concrete legs straddle an 18,800 square-metre plaza with views over the characteristic urban jumble of Tokyo. Ugly it may be, but this is where the real drama of the building kicks in. Standing on the perspex-covered escalator, the wandering visitor is propelled from the 1990s world of pachinko parlours and cram schools and neon and snarling overhead cables, high into the glowing, picturesque world of 17th-century Edo. With typical precision, the height of the museum is exactly 62m — also the height of Edo Castle, Japan's greatest medieval stronghold, which once stood nearby.

The sheer scale of the interior takes the breath away. A half-size reproduction (more than 50m long) of the Nihombashi Bridge, once the main thoroughfare into the city, is suspended in a darkened hangar of steel and concrete. Peering over its balustrades, you can see the replica buildings of old Edo spread out to one side and Tokyo after the Western-influenced Meiji Restoration on the other.

The mezzanine floor at the end of the bridge is full of surprises. A scale model shows that Edo was hardly different in size to modern Tokyo — its population in the mid-17th century was one million (at

Architecture may be Tokyo's forte, but there is one building that uses space better than all others: the Edo-Tokyo Museum.

Sophie Campbell offers a users' guide

the time Paris had half a million people, London had 750,000), which made it the biggest city in the world — and you can press buttons to light up sectors of the population. Whereas the warrior or samurai class occupied 70 per cent of the city centre, the townspeople in their tiny wooden houses took up less than 20 per cent.

Just to ram home the comparison, there is a model which, when I visited, was surrounded by fascinated visitors — of the residence of the *daimyo*, or feudal lord (immensely powerful in the everyday life of the city, but of course as feeble as a cockroach compared to the shogun himself), with vast courtyards, stable-like quarters for his retinue and a mighty decorated gate which was used only when the shogun came to visit. Nearby is a model to exactly the same scale, which is crammed with streets and shops and tiny wooden dwellings known as "burning houses" because they were so easily destroyed (and so easily rebuilt).

Models are the great strength of the Edo-Tokyo Museum. They are fascinating in their detail and impressive in their scale, and they are backed up by exhibits of documents, possessions, costumes and exquisite silk screens showing scenes from contemporary life. The Edo Castle — later destroyed by fire — is cut in half and peopled with visiting *daimyos*, faces pressed to the floor so they cannot see the shogun (eye contact was a sign of disrespect). There are replicas of shops, houses, theatres, the famous wooden aqueduct, whose water was poured on the brow of every new Edo baby, and the old entertainment area by the Edo-bashi Bridge, peopled with 1,500 tiny figures.

Where it falls down — from a Western point of view, that is, and then only mildly — is that the labelling in English is sporadic (this is why the free guides are so useful) and the enormous, obedient queues shuffling along in front of the exhibit cases mean that if you like popping from one thing to another at random, you are going to feel frustrated. As several impa-

tient foreigners were discovering while I was there, that is just not the way they do things in Japan.

Another cultural difference is that a lot of information is presented in the form of lists, or maps covered with dots and cross-hatching, which reminded me why I had given up O level geography at school. And perhaps because of the large number of visitors, there are very few seats to sink into: the museum is designed to keep people moving.

That is the end of the criticism. Pass under the Nihombashi Bridge and you enter the world of Tokyo after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 — a time when Japan threw open its doors to the West and transformed its clothes, buildings and transport as a result. There is a model of "Brick Town" which sprang up in the district of Ginza (with horses and carriages causing consternation among pedestrians and richshaw drivers) behind which the normal life of the wooden city went on relatively undisturbed. There is also a quirky display of domestic possessions assembled by Edward Sylvester Morse, an American collector, which gives an intimate view of this strange, hybrid period of Japanese history.

The museum ends on a sombre note — the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, which killed 52,000 people and cleared the way for the great rise of the Tokyo suburbs, and the air raids of the Second World War in which 100,000 died. An American judge, who was doing the museum circuit at the same time as me, was as shocked as I was by the photographs of the ravaged city. We were both embarrassed that we had not known how badly Tokyo was bombed.

The Edo-Tokyo Museum, which opened in 1992, was 12 years in the planning, cost £250 million to build and has faced its fair share of controversy.

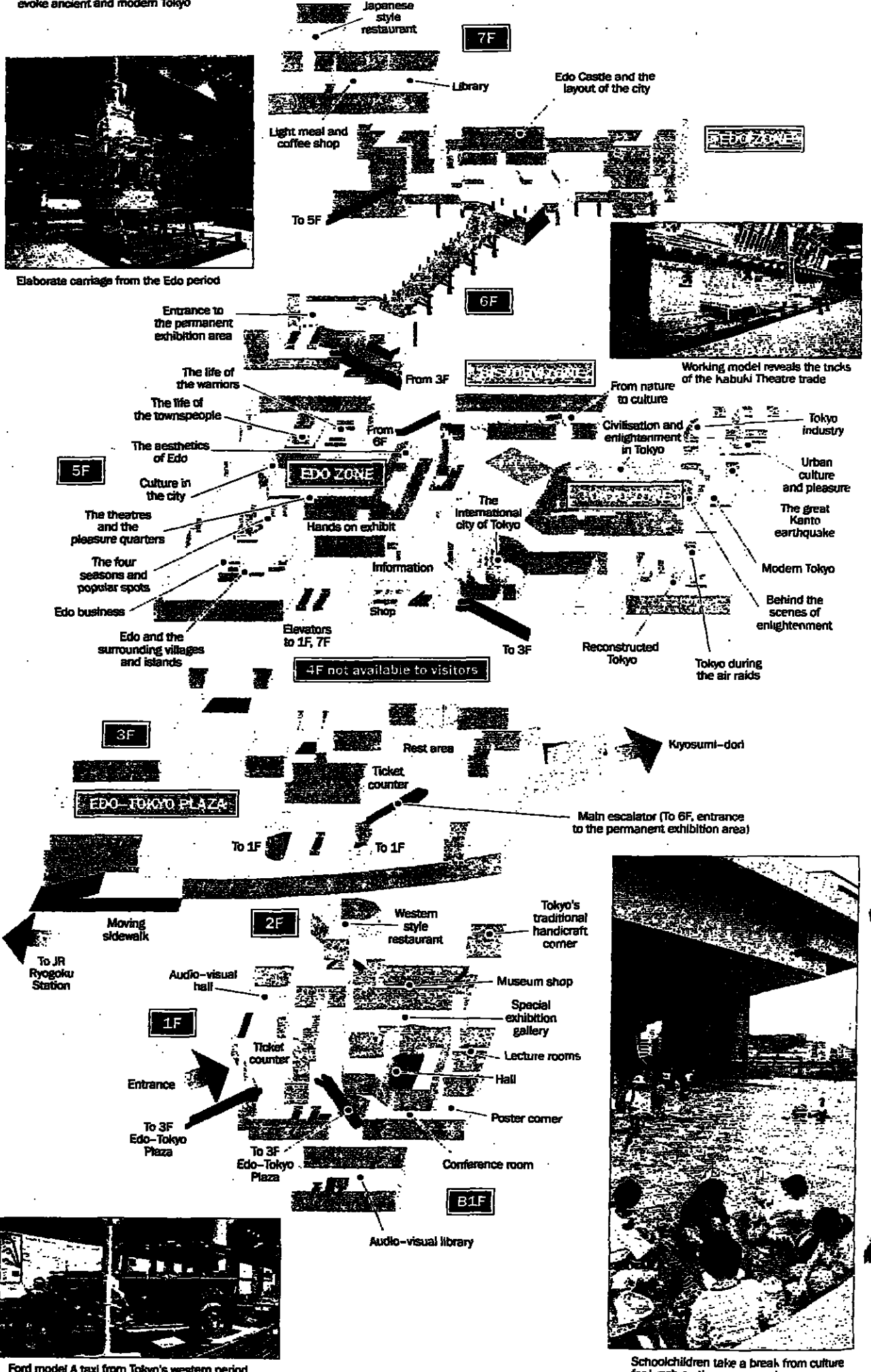
Despite criticism of its chunky exterior (and I cannot say I disagree), in terms of style and entertainment value, the interior of this museum is worth every penny.



THE EDO-TOKYO MUSEUM

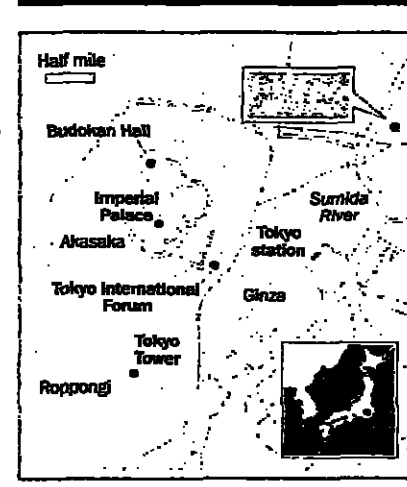


The museum exterior is designed to evoke ancient and modern Tokyo. Exact replica of the Ryogoku Bashi Nishi-zome bridge



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MAKING THE MOST OF THE EDO-TOKYO MUSEUM



■ Sophie Campbell travelled to Tokyo with Japan Airlines (0345 747700). In August, return flights from London start at £909, available from Jaltour (0171-495 1775). Prices peak at £959 August 6-17, dropping to £879 in September.

■ She stayed at Sawanoya Ryokan (tel 00 813 3822 2251; fax 00 813 3822 2252), near Ueno Park. The hotel has friendly, English-speaking staff, and Japanese rooms for about £20 per person. The museum is a 20-minute subway/train ride away.

■ Getting there: Take the JR Sobu Line to Ryogoku Station, cross to the opposite platform and follow the signs (same direction as the Sumo Stadium).

■ When to go: You cannot win with crowds in Japan. On weekdays there

are crowds of schoolchildren and at weekends families pour in. Mealtimes are always a good time to start, or an hour or two before late closing (Thursday and Fridays).

■ What to do if you are in a hurry: Walk through the museum at a reasonably brisk pace until you reach the working model of a kabuki theatre on the lower floor. Usually surrounded by giggling children, this shows all the hilarious backstage tricks employed during a kabuki play — swivelling doors, revolving walls, trapdoors, mirrors and lights — and is worth a five-minute pause. Save some time to visit the museum shop (see next item), and walk back to Ryogoku Station via the National Sumo Stadium, keeping a sharp eye out for rotund wrestlers.

■ You've seen the exhibition, now buy the postcard of your favourite exhibit: The main museum shop, on the lower ground floor, is an exhibition in itself. Along with all the usual postcards and opulent guidebooks (the museum catalogue, a hefty tome, is £13) there is a beautiful collection of washi, or hand-made Japanese paper, which would be perfect for framing (£8 per sheet). For children, there are packets of origami paper for £1.30, make-your-own torii gate kits for £5.20 and ingenious pop-up kabuki greeting cards for £3.60.

■ Cultural nibbles: There are three eateries in the museum — a Japanese restaurant (£4-£20 for a meal), the MMC Coffee Corner on the top floor (which has a rather dull Western

menu: coffee and tea £1.80, sandwiches £2.90) and a coffee shop called Amamidokoro on the first floor, where you can get Japanese tea and bean paste cakes for about £3. This is the most interesting option for refreshments, but can be quite busy.

■ Do not miss: The chance to walk around the museum in the company of a free, English-speaking guide. Mine was studying economics at Tokyo University. She pointed out many things I had not noticed and answered all of my questions. Also ask for a free visitors' guide, printed in English.

■ Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday 10am-6pm (8pm on Thursday and Friday). Note that the museum is closed on Mondays (and on Tuesday if the Monday is a national holiday).

■ Admission: Adults £3.20; children £1.60, pre-school children and OAPs free of charge.

■ Disabled visitors: There is a staff-operated escalator for disabled people at Ryogoku Station, but crossing the platforms is a drag; a taxi to the museum's underground entrance is the easiest option. The museum itself is spacious and has plenty of ramps, lifts and toilets with easy access for the disabled.

■ Contact numbers: Edo-Tokyo Museum (00 813 3626 9974), 1-4-1 Yokoami, Sumida-ku, Tokyo 130. Japan National Tourist Organisation (0171-734 9638) — ask for information on accommodation, particularly the Welcome Inns and Japanese Inn Group leaflets.

“Mon radiateur est sprung un league...?”

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مركز من الأصيل

On her honeymoon, Mary Loudon wanted to get away from it all. The Greek islands of Cephalonia and Ithaca proved perfect

This romantic land of Odysseus

We wanted a relaxing honeymoon: no hustle and bustle, just somewhere warm with quiet beaches and a few pleasant restaurants where we could enjoy some romantic evening meals. Looking at a map, my eyes fell upon the Ionian islands off the west coast of Greece. We decided to spend a fortnight doing absolutely nothing on two of the islands, Ithaca and Cephalonia, and soon discovered that we could not have made a better choice.

Ithaca was our first stop-off. We had assumed there would be hillsides of burnt amber and scratchy undergrowth, but the reality was lush green and succulent purples of the cypresses, pines, grape vineyards, olive and lavender groves. Ithaca has remained relatively untouched by tourism as it can be reached only by ferry, and it is not hard to imagine what it was like in the time of Odysseus. Much remains of his wild landscape, and the island also boasts some impressive ancient churches and monasteries, tucked away down sandy tracks or perched confidently on the edges of hills.

We stayed in Kioni and fell in love with it. A village of unassuming charm, its entrance from the sea is overlooked by three disused windmills; its streets wind unobtrusively round the bay before disappearing into the hills beyond. Blissfully, there is nothing to do in Kioni itself, which has left village life more or less intact: most tourists depart each day on small outboard motorboats for one of the many beaches that are within easy reach of the bay.

We made these excursions every day, leaving our comfortable modern apartment with a picnic, books, snorkels and enough money for tea at Frikas, the next village along the coast. It was my idea of heaven: on both islands the beaches are broad with plenty of shade and, if you love swimming, you can venture safely round the coast for miles. August is too



Andrew and Mary, the honeymooners, in Fiskardho, Cephalonia. The village of Kioni, right, on Ithaca, where the couple first stayed



hot to do anything else anyway. August is also the month when the winds get up every afternoon, blowing sailors off course and, at night, causing the insistent clanking of masts on moored sailing boats. In the morning, just before sunrise, the wind drops and the sea resumes its look of blank innocence. If you are caught out in a small boat between two and four in the afternoon, when the wind is generally at its highest, it is suddenly easy to understand why the ancient Greeks were convinced that the gods expressed their wrath through the sea.

The beaches, which are mostly pebble on Ithaca, were not altogether perfect, although they were secluded and quiet. From a distance they look wonderful, but

as you get closer you can see that almost every one is blotted with tar and littered with plastic bottles. Tourists are to blame, but I wished that a greater effort had been made by the island authorities not just to clean up, but to insist that others do, too, with heavy penalties. The result is paradise — but sprinkled with litter.

In the evenings, we ate at one of the three good restaurants in the bay at Kioni, all of which serve plain but delicious Greek staples such as battered squid, courgette and aubergine, souvlaki, stuffed vegetables and Greek salad. But, as in much of Greece, fish is astonishingly expensive.

On Wednesdays and Fridays you can

eat at Hamilton House, an elegant villa built in 1892 by Elizabeth Hamilton, niece of Nelson's Lady Hamilton, who fell in love with a local farmer and came to live with him in Kioni. The present owner, Costas Raftopoulos, is aware of the building's romantic legacy. "It's perfect for newlyweds," he grumbled, gesturing into an oak-paneled bedroom. "These beds see a lot of things but they never so much as squeak."

Cephalonia had more of a buzz to it. The largest of the Ionian islands, its beaches are long and sandy and its wild countryside is quite spectacular. Mount Enos, in the centre of the island, is higher than any mountain in the British Isles. There are also underground lakes and

caves to explore, and vineyards to visit. Every sort of watersport is available, the nightlife is lively and those who prefer sightseeing have the ruin of a dozen medieval churches which contain beautifully preserved 16th-century icons; there are also ruined fortresses and monasteries. Mycenaean tombs dating back to 1200BC, and a 6th-century basilica outside Fiskardho. The birdlife is also plentiful and varied (we saw golden eagles, ravens, hoopoes, kestrels and warblers).

We stayed on the northeast tip of the island, in a villa with stunning views over the sea and mountains. Eight miles from Fiskardho, the only village on Cephalonia to survive the 1953 earthquake, we were perfectly placed for privacy and ad-

GREEK FACT BOX

- Mary Loudon travelled with the Greek Islands Club (0181-232 9780), which has a week's self-catering at apartments in Kyparissia on Ithaca during July and August from £491 per person, based on three sharing, with car hire and flights from Gatwick and transfers.
- One week at Sunset House in Fiskardho on Cephalonia in July and August costs from 1951 per person, based on three sharing, with car hire and flights from Gatwick included.
- Small motorboats are available for hire on Ithaca for a week from £180 in July and August. Car hire is £215.
- Eating out: £20 for two, with wine.
- Reading: *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* by Louis de Bernières (Minerva, £6.99); *The Greek Islands (Rough Guide)*, £10.99; *Baedeker's Greek Islands (AA)*, £7.99; *Essential Greek Islands (AA)*, £4.99 and for those interested in birdlife, *The Birds of Greece (A&C Black, £25)* by George Handrinos and T. Akrivos.

venture. From here we visited beaches and the fairytales underground lake at Melissani and took a winding track to the summit of Mount Enos. We ate in several of Fiskardho's friendly but rather overdone restaurants before venturing into the more remote villages where the food was better and cheaper. Twice we ate on the terrace of our villa as the sun dropped like a red-hot pebble beneath the inky horizon.

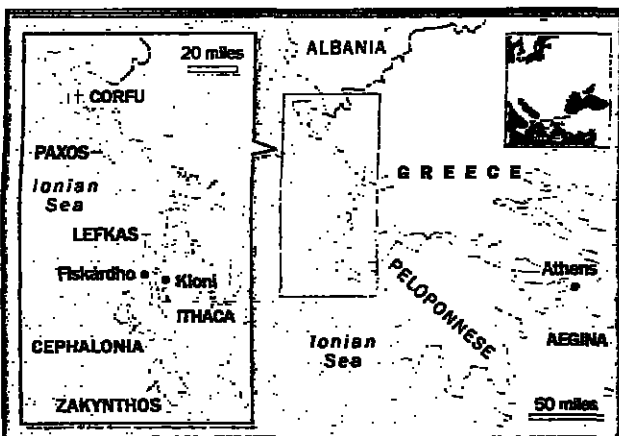
Ithaca may have been quieter, but on Cephalonia we felt incredibly remote. Utterly beguiled by the mountains and the surrounding seas, by the lazy cafes, the sunsets, the whirr of the cicadas, the indigo night skies and the midnight descent of silence, we were captivated.

What's salt and pepper in Greek?

My father had a sure-fire technique for dealing with foreigners who appeared not to understand him: he would speak louder. Eventually he would end up shouting. "Where's the salt and pepper? Salt! Pepper! Where?" Being hard of hearing himself, he put the native's inability to understand plain English down to deafness. Somehow, he always got through in the end.

The rest of us, less Anglo-centric, fumble with phrase books and the shreds and patches of foreign languages. So it was with a hazy notion of improving my utterly elementary Greek that I set off for Athens and the nearby island of Aegina with Spencer, my six-year-old son. No way was this boy going to hear me shouting about the condiments. Not in English, anyway.

Andy Martin took his six-year-old son to Athens and Aegina to try to improve their language skills



mens symmetry and cunning linearity, must have been perfect back in the 5th century BC. But in its ruined, broken, deconstructed state it is even more meaningful and poetic. Like those ships that, having been holed and sunk, become exotic and intricate underwater habitats, so too the whole site of the Acropolis — constructed and reconstructed, invaded, bombed, shattered, eroded and ripped off — is inhabited by history, encrusted with battles and ghosts, overgrown with heroism and villainy.

An olive tree, signifying peace, now grows in front of the Caryatids where Athena won her contest with Poseidon to plant the first tree. "Eirini [peace] is what Greece stands for," mused Dimitra, my Athenian friend.

"Hat!" I retorted. "Polemos [war], you mean."

Her next sentence was extremely long and passionately patriotic and more than a touch bellicose, but boiled down to something like: "So, you insult my country?"

"But what about Troy,

'Any fool armed with a dictionary can say, Where is the airport?'

bouring hill and scored a direct hit. The damage would have been minimal except for the fact that the Turks were using the temple as a gunpowder magazine at the time.

I particularly like the story of how, during the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s, when it became clear that the Turks, having run low on munitions, were pillaging lead from the pillars of the Parthenon itself, the Greeks called a truce and supplied their adversaries with fresh ammunition rather than see any further violations of this sacred place.

Aegina, only 35 minutes out of Piraeus (the port of Athens) on the *iptameno* (hydrofoil or "flying dolphin"), but a million miles from the hectic mayhem of Athens, is much more of a laidback land of grapevines, pistachio orchards and warm, clear water. But it was once the dominant power in Greece and therefore has its share of awesome ruins. The temple of Aphaia in the north of the island, roughly contemporary

with the Parthenon, is the best known, but Aegina town boasts the remains of a settlement, Kolona, dating back to around 2500BC.

Having always been wobbly myself on Doric (plain) versus Ionic (ornate) and the like, I was surreptitiously keen that my son should acquire the elements of a foundation in classical architecture. But in truth he was most excited and moved, as was I, by the Palaiochora (palaio: old, chora: capital). This is a 9th-century ghost town on a deserted hill on the north coast, which is said to have as many churches as there are days in the year.

Although fishing was the main livelihood, the shrewd fishermen lived in safety up on the mountain to keep safely out of reach of passing pirates. Until, that is, in 1537 when Barbarossa, the general of Sultan Suleiman I, landed at the port below, came storming up the hill, massacred the men and enslaved all the women and children. Abandoned at last in 1837, the empty stones are now a monument to so much slaughter.

By the end of our week, my son already had *kali mera* (good day), *geia-sou* (good-bye), *nai* (yes) and, above all, *okhi* (no) under his belt. He even mastered *choris zambon* (without meat) and *periperios* (street kiosk).

Ultimately I expect to rely on him as my interpreter while, as the brain cells finally collapse into a noble ruin, I confine myself to yelling, "Salt! Pepper!!"



The temple of Aphaia, on Aegina, built at about the same time as the Parthenon

FACT FILE

- Where to start learning Greek: Decide whether you are aiming for holiday or high-level Greek. If it is the former, check your local adult education institute for evening classes. Courses and private lessons are also often advertised on noticeboards at Greek churches. In August, the Greek Institute, 34 Bush Hill Road, London N21 2DS (0181-360 7968) is publishing a *Directory of Greek Language Courses in the UK 1998-99* (available from the Institute for £7.50). Modern Greek is offered as a degree course at many universities.
- Useful numbers (UK): Greek Embassy Education Department (0171-221 0093) and the Foundation for Hellenic Culture (0171-499 9826) for general information about Greek language and culture. The Greek Institute (see above) offers examination courses and correspondence courses; price for the academic year 1998-99 is £200 (students £100).
- Useful numbers (Greece): The Athens Centre (00 301 701 2268/70) 5242; fax 00 301 701 3803; e-mail: athenscc@compulink.gr runs year-round courses for beginners to advanced proficiency level with a strong emphasis on Greek life and culture; courses start at around £220 with a £4 registration fee. The centre also holds a three-week summer session on the island of Spisyes which costs about £965 including single room accommodation.
- The Modern Greek Language Center of the University of Athens (00 301 724 8979) offers courses at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels; prices vary.
- Virgin (01293 747747) has return flights to Athens from Gatwick and Heathrow for £192 plus tax; easyJet (0870 600 0000) has Athens returns from Luton from £141.70.

The only place in Athens that you can more or less rely on a taxi-driver knowing is the one place you cannot drive to — the Acropolis. You have to walk, or rather climb, since "Akropolis" breaks down into "akro" and "polis" — "the top (of)" and "city" (hence it means fortress or stronghold). The Parthenon, in all its im-

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Eight go mad in Barcelona



Kissing the pilot for starters

Seven women gave a friend a hen party she'll never forget. Cath Urquhart was one of them

Where are eight 20 and 30-something women on a hen weekend likely to find a mix of sun, culture, good food and tacky nightclubs? Barcelona sounded as if it would fit the bill, so Victoria (the bride-to-be), Jo, Ann, Charlie, Lorraine, Carrie, Rebecca and I headed for Luton Airport...

Friday 10.45am: On the train from King's Cross to Luton, Victoria warns us that the less her boyfriend Brian knows about this weekend, the better. Likewise, she will refuse to listen to details of her boyfriend Brian's stag weekend in Amsterdam with 16 mates.

1.10pm: We board the plane: we are flying with easyJet which does not assign seats, so you sit where you like, which seems to speed things up.

2.45pm: One of the good-looking young easyJet crew comes up to ask if one of us would go into the cockpit to play a trick on the co-pilot. We naturally pick Victoria, who thinks it is a prank we have set up, but it's not. Nevertheless, she has to go into the cockpit and say to co-pilot Tony Pickett, "Your last landing was a little heavy — would you mind flaring a bit earlier this time, please?" The captain grins and Tony groans. Victoria kisses him for the camera.

5pm, local time (one hour ahead of Britain): After arriving in Barcelona we commandeer two taxis. On Carrie's recommendation, for she used to live in Barcelona, we have booked four rooms at the Hotel Jardí in the Gothic quarter, because it is central and cheap — it turns out to be a clean and friendly place, too.

5.45pm: We have the four best rooms (and the management does not know I am a travel journalist), set one above the other, each with two balconies overlooking two pretty, traffic-



One of Victoria's challenges is to acquire a man's underwear, but Nelson, a barman at the Baja Beach nightclub, is no help at all

free squares. Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol and Plaça del Pi. 6.25pm: Sitting outside in the warm evening at the Teima Bar in Plaça del Pi, we give Victoria her challenges. During the weekend she must kiss a Spanish waiter, preferably one with a moustache; she must wear underwear as outerwear in public; she must go out wearing only a large T-shirt provided by Lorraine, with nothing on underneath (the logo on the T-shirt says: Underneath I'm completely naked); she must get two men on the beach to apply her suntan lotion; and she must acquire a pair of men's underpants without buying them. She begins to look a little nervous.

7.10pm: We're wandering down Ramblas, Barcelona's humming main thoroughfare,

which is packed with families and couples. Traffic is relegated to a narrow single lane each side of the large pedestrianised area. We stop to listen to the buskers and watch the entertainers. A favourite performance is for actors, painted as a statue, to pose motionless until a coin drops into the hat, then wink broadly at the giver. Small children love it.

7.45pm: We have reached the port and a choice of packed seafood restaurants. We only planned to have a drink at the Tapasbar Paradis Restaurant, but were all so hungry that we ordered dozens of dishes. Soon the table was littered with plates and chicken bones. Sangria all round to toast Victoria. 9.30pm: The bill came to just 16,000 pesetas for eight of us — about £8 a head. The exchange



There was culture, too: at Gaudi's Parc Güell...



...and at his unfinished cathedral, the Sagrada Família

rate of 250 pesetas to £1 means Spain is good value for the British this summer.

10pm: We have strolled back to Plaça Reial, another traffic-free square, much larger and more formal than those by our hotel and with imposing, 19th-century classical buildings on four sides. Palm trees soften the architecture and street entertainers play fast and furious Spanish music as we sit at tables outside over our drinks. 11.5am: All of us except Jo and Ann are still in the Glacià Bar on Plaça Reial, now very merry and playing a dangerous truth game in which we have to admit to past indiscretions. I am ordered to put my notebook away.

5am: Charlie and Lorraine last the longest, and finally stagger back from a Seventies club.

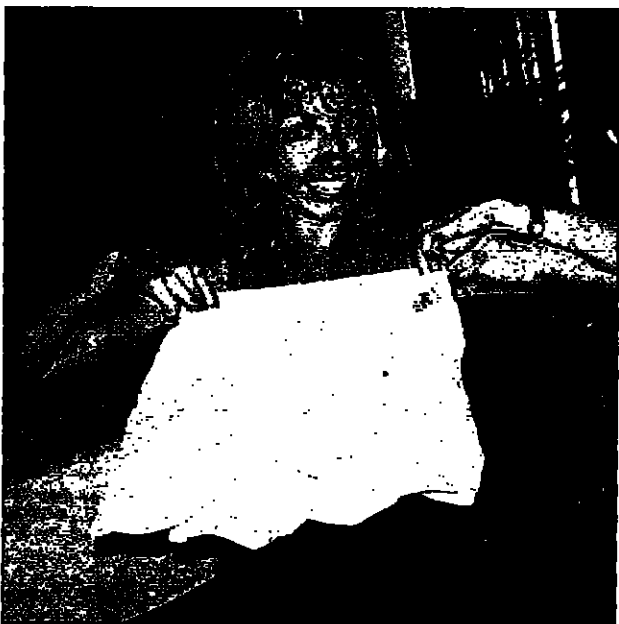
Saturday 11am: We emerge for breakfast outdoors at Bar del Pi, which seems to have the slowest service of any café in the city.

1pm: On the train to Sitges, 20 miles down the coast and a popular beach resort for Barcelonians. We're as excited as kids to be on the top of the double-decker train.

2.30pm: Although the beach is packed, we somehow find eight sunbeds together and organise sandwiches, ice-creams, drinks, magazines, potatoe skins and sun cream. Victoria is strangely reluctant to ask nearby men to apply her sun cream. We all fall asleep in the sun.

4pm: A swim turns into an exercise in avoiding floating rubbish and various unmentionables — this is the dirtiest water I have ever swum in. Back to the sunbed in a hurry. 7.30pm: Train back to Barcelona to shower and change.

"The barmen stop serving drinks to pull a girl from the crowd and dance with her on the bar"



Our fearless bride-to-be with the captured underpants

10pm: Our big night out. We start again with drinks at the Teima Bar and Victoria immediately ticks off two challenges: she's wearing a black negligee as a dress, and is soon giving Miguel Mellado, our (moustachioed) waiter, a big stage kiss. "That's the last time I kiss a man with a moustache," says Victoria, thinking of her clean-shaven intended. 11.15pm: We've taken taxis to Port Olímpic, the area developed for the 1992 Olympics, and have found a table at one of the many seafood restaurants. Almost before we finish ordering, plates of excellent squid, prawns and fish arrive.

12.30am: We're pretty merry and, to our shame, singing Seventies disco anthems to the rest of the restaurant, which also includes a Spanish hen party. We reckon we're having more fun than they are...

2am: The Baja Beach is packed. A cavernous nightclub on several levels, its staff take the theme to its logical conclusion by wearing minuscule bikinis or swimming trunks. The security men are dressed as lifeguards and stand on podiums in the middle of the heaving dance floor. The barmen, muscular hunks wearing just shorts and with their names written in marker

pen on their chests, periodically stop serving drinks to pull a girl out of the crowd and dance with her on top of the bar. During the dance, the girl has to unbutton the man's shorts and remove them, then help him mix a cocktail in a shaker he puts down the front of his underpants. "There's no way I'm doing that," says Victoria, who moments later is of course hauled out of the crowd to undergo this ritual humiliation in front of 1,000 clubbers.

4am: We leave the Baja Beach and return to the row of small bars nearby. Victoria has several challenges yet to fulfil so we accost an American, Tim, and explain why we need his underpants. "Oh man," he says. "I've met English girls like you before. I'm travelling round Europe and I only have six pairs of boxers, so you can't have them."

4.30am: We finally find a group of British lads who nominate one of their number, Gavin, to donate his underwear, which he does with good grace and discretion (luckily he is wearing a long shirt). The barman gets upset and tells Gavin he is not allowed to strip on the premises. We are laughing too much to care.

5am: Taxis back to the hotel, captured underpants flying triumphantly out of the window.

Sunday 12.45am: Why are we eating at Bar del Pi again? The coffee and croissants are excellent, but the service is terrible. 2.15pm: Victoria, Charlie and I want to see the sights: the others head to Barcelona's city beach. We take the Metro from Liceu to Sagrada Família to see Gaudi's extraordinary, still unfinished cathedral. 3.30pm: Although it's a summer Sunday, there are few visitors so the queue is short.

5pm: We take a taxi to Parc Güell, which is dotted with more of Gaudi's unusual architecture and sculpture — stone lizards, elaborate fountains, a mushroom-like platform offering an excellent view of the city. After joining the families strolling around the park we catch up with some sleep, snoozing on the grass.

8pm: Back at the hotel to prepare for our final assault on the town.

10pm: La Fonda restaurant is so popular there is a queue outside; after 20 minutes we get a table. The food is competent, if not as inspiring as the previous night, but very cheap: goat's cheese and salmon salad is £2.50; paella £2.70 per person and an exceptional chocolate cake with raspberry coulis is just £1.10. The bill is £60 for eight people, three courses, coffee and wine.

2am: After a stroll through Plaça Reial it's back to the hotel. Monday 10am: Victoria crosses Plaça del Pi to the Teima Bar wearing nothing but the T-shirt donated by Lorraine. Luckily Miguel is not on duty — we don't want to over-excite him. 11.10am: Jo, Victoria (now fully clothed) and I visit Barcelona's cathedral, La Seu, and stroll in its 14th-century cloister. The others head for Sagrada Família and Parc Güell.

12 noon: Spiritual needs now satisfied, we head for the shops, and all find new pairs of shoes.

1pm: Before heading to the airport, we have a final tapas lunch at a quiet, friendly bar on Carrer des Angels. Although it is busy with office workers on their lunch break, we manage to find a table out in the sun. Only as we leave do we notice that it is called Bar Victoria.

The Verdict Barcelona is an excellent place for a hen weekend as it is such a party city: on Fridays and Saturdays most people do not go out until 10pm and they stay in the clubs all night. There is also enough culture and shopping for most, plus some great beaches (although we found dirty water).

As for Victoria: she completed four of her five challenges, but at 2pm today she faces a challenge of a different sort — getting married.

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BARCELONA FACT BOX

- Getting there: easyJet (0870 600 0000) has flights to Barcelona from £108 return.
- Packages: Thomson Breakaway (0181-210 4500) has three nights' B&B at a three-star hotel in August from £375; flights from Gatwick or Heathrow. Other operators include Kirker (0171-231 3333) and Travelscene (0181-427 8800).
- Where to stay: The Hotel Jardí on Plaça Sant Josep Oriol (00 34 93 301 5900). Twin-rooms £31 per night.
- Where to go: Baja Beach at Port Olímpic, entry £8. Sagrada Família, entry £3. Parc Güell, entrance free.
- Guidebook choice: Barcelona (Rough Guides, £8.99).
- Information: Spanish Tourist Board (0171-486 8077); brochure line (0891 669920).

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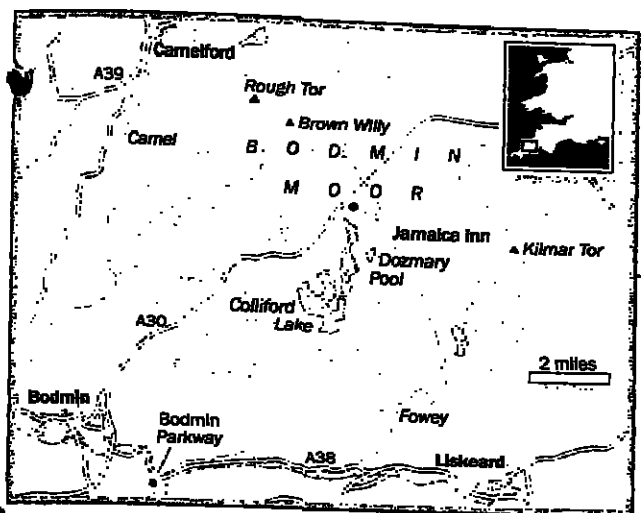
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Searching for the Beast of Bodmin



Robert Verkaik makes tracks for Cornwall, where tourists are joining the hunt for the big cat

There is no need to head to Africa to go on safari these days. A steady rise in the number of alleged sightings of big cats on Bodmin Moor means Cornwall can now offer visitors a home-grown alternative — with helmets optional. Since the first reports in 1992 of the so-called Beast of Bodmin, tourists have been scouring the moorlands for a glimpse of what is reputedly Britain's largest wild carnivore. Some have been encour-

aged by the knowledge that Fleet Street will pay good money for a photograph of the beast.

‘I reckon she got rid of it, just let it go on the moor’

However, as I arrived at Bodmin Parkway railway station, I could not help remembering that the last photographs turned out to be fakes and were rejected by the *News of the World* on the eve of publication. So was I on a genuine big-cat hunt — or a wild goose chase?

I made a start at the Bodmin Tourist Information Centre. Sue Muelaner, the manager, told me she was not allowed to confirm to tourists the existence of the Beast. This, she said, was on the explicit instructions of the Bodmin and District Publicity Committee who had asked staff to refrain from expressing personal opinions about the animal.

Ms Muelaner said: “There are people who have taken

photographs of creatures which look like cats, pumas, cougars and so on. But we’ve never seen one, not a footprint, a piece of fur or anything.”

So tourist officials might enjoy the benefits that beast-hunting visitors bring to Cornwall, but they’re saying nothing. But my taxi driver, Bill, was in no doubt. He remembered an early evening drive along the A38 between Bodmin and Liskeard, when a large “panther-like animal” sauntered across the road in front of his car before darting into the trees. The Colliford Tavern describes itself as “an oasis on Bodmin Moor”. Offering en-suite bedrooms and camping facilities, it is popular with Beast-hunting holidaymakers.

Laura Edwards, the proprietor, said: “There have been a few people who have stayed specifically to look for the Beast, and we think there is certainly something out there.” Laura’s father, Ron, claims first-hand experience. He saw a big black cat prowling through thick grass near his land when he was out walking his dog. The next morning he found a discarded sheep’s leg in the campsite car park. Ms Edwards says they do not shout about it because they do not want to frighten campers who use the lavatories in the middle of the night.

News of the alleged sightings of the Beast sweeps



The truth is out there: walkers pause at Brown Willy, the highest point in Cornwall, and survey Bodmin Moor, where mysterious big cats have apparently been sighted

through Bodmin pubs quicker than a sea-blown mist. In fact, you will be hard pushed to find anyone on Bodmin Moor who does not have an opinion about it. In the Colliford Tavern, Russell, the barman, is telling the story about the woman, a pub regular, who used to keep a panther as a pet when she lived on the moor: “Whenever she came to the pub she used to bring the panther with her. It was quite playful at first but then it started to get aggressive, clawing the bar and occasionally taking nips at customers. The previous landlord got fed up with it and had the animal barred.”

According to Russell, the next time the woman came back she was alone. “I reckon she got rid of it, just let it go on the moor,” he said. There is no point in looking for tell-tale scratches on the woodwork, as the pub has been refurbished since the cat’s last visit.

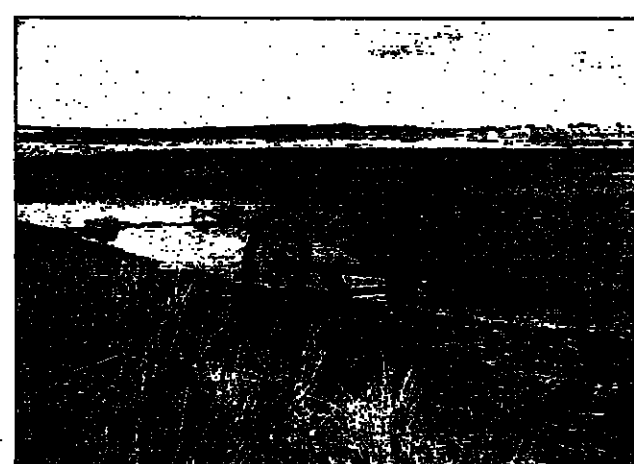
Released pet panthers and pumas, following the implementation of legislation licensing their captivity, form the most common explanation for the origin of the Beast. Regulars at the Jamaica Inn on the moor have hung a framed copy of the best-known photograph of the cat, which appeared in *The Sun*, on a wall in the public bar (above, right). The inn has curiosity rooms which have helped to make it one of the largest tourist attractions on the moor.

Regulars at the Jamaica Inn after a brief stay in 1930 at this former smugglers’ retreat. The pub now sells Beast of Bodmin Moor T-shirts, too, but it remains a good place to pick up the latest gossip on the Beast.



The legendary photograph of a large cat, seen on top of a wall on Bodmin Moor

From all the hints I had gathered, I used an OS map to plot a “big-cat trail” along the Fowey River, past the Jamaica Inn and up to the highest point in Cornwall — the tor of Brown Willy. This would not only take in some of the best walking on the moor but would also place me near the sites of the other Bodmin legends. Near the beginning of the gentle dip of the Fowey valley lies Dozmary Pool, the lake into which Bedivere, one of the Arthurian knights, hurled Excalibur before it was claimed by the Dozmary’s out-



Arthurian legend features Dozmary Pool

stretched hand. On a bright, early morning, the dancing lights on the smoky waters create an eerie atmosphere, making it the perfect site for this part of the Arthurian legend.

Nestling in the Fowey valley are the farms belonging to John Goodenough and Rosemary Rhodes, who have lost more livestock to an unidentified predator than anyone else. Their video evidence of an animal and its kills helped prompt the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) to launch an official investigation into the sightings three years ago. “I knew something weird was killing my sheep, and then we started bumping into it,” said Ms Rhodes. “I actually managed to video it coming down the side of one of my fields.”

Ms Rhodes told me that one of her former farm hands saw a cat-like creature in the valley just six weeks ago. Approaching the Jamaica Inn I began to fancy I saw panther footprints in the mud. It is important to distinguish between big cat and ordinary dog prints. Quentin Rose, a professional dangerous-animal trapper and

consultant, says each has four toes and a back pad — a dog’s toes radiate outwards, a big cat’s point forward together.

As the mist continued to swirl and I became less sure of my bearings, I took solace in the fact that the man from MAFF had visited but had not been convinced that there was a free-roaming beast. I also took comfort in some of the more light-hearted stories I had heard. Robbie Duffy, a River Fowey bailiff, said that at the peak of the media interest locals had placed cardboard cat cutouts on walls and taken pictures of them. He also said he knew a couple of boys who had scared the living daylight out of a twitchy farmer by attaching wheels to a stuffed domestic cat and pulling it across his field from the safety of a hedge.

By the time I reached the marshes that surround Brown Willy, the mists had evaporated and the moor seemed a much less forbidding place.

These granite uplands, which are no more than ten miles across, convey a sense of loneliness quite out of proportion to their size. The littering of Bronze Age standing stones and deserted tin mines helps to create an impression of an ancient land steeped in man-made mystery. In this context, it is easy to see how bored farmers might have dreamt up the legend of Bodmin Moor. Nevertheless, I challenge anyone walking there not to mistake at least one distant black sheep for something a little more intriguing.



The Jamaica Inn at Bolventor, which sells Beast of Bodmin Moor T-shirts

BODMIN FACTS

- On foot:** The moor is criss-crossed by a large number of rights of way. You can make your own route by using an Ordnance Survey map, but be careful not to trespass. Some of the walking along the Fowey River valley traverses privately owned land and you may need to ask permission.
- Guides:** The Bodmin Tourist Information Centre (01208 76616) can put you in touch with guides who will adapt walks to your own cat-hunting requirements. The locals at the Jamaica Inn are used to people asking about the beast. One or two will even take you to the places of the reported sightings.
- Cycling:** The well-signposted Camel Trail, which starts from Bodmin town and follows the route of the old railway, will take you past a number of reported sightings. It will get you into the heart of the moor and on a bike you stand a better chance of catching the Beast by surprise. You can hire bikes from Moorland Cycle Hire, Hallagenna Farm, St Breward, Bodmin Moor (01208 850439).
- Horseback:** There are a number of stables that will provide you with a guided tour of the moor. Prices at Denby Farm stables at Nansallion (01208 72013) start at £8 an hour for an escorted trek off-road. Bodmin TIC also has telephone numbers for stables.
- By train:** Two steam railways, Bodmin & Wenford Railway and the Looe Steam Railway, follow routes close to the moor. There have been a number of sightings of the Beast in-country. Both offer stops from where you can continue your tracking on foot.
- Where to stay:** There is a wide range of hotel, B&B and self-catering accommodation. Ask the Bodmin TIC for a list. The Colliford Tavern (01208 821333) offers B&B for £25 a night (£10 single supplement). The Jamaica Inn (01566 86250) offers B&B at £35 for single rooms; doubles, £25 per person; four-poster bed, £35 per person.

The Pyramids at Giza, the Monastery of St Catherine & the ‘Rose Red City’ of Petra

THREE GREATS of the ANCIENT WORLD

In many ways this journey follows much the same route as that made by T. E. Lawrence 50 odd years ago when he travelled from Arabia across Sinai and Suez to Cairo and recounted in his classic, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Then the journey by camel took a considerable time but today modern highways and hydrofoil services across the Red Sea have very much reduced the journey time. The advantage that this particular journey has over others that we had planned and operated previously, besides the moderate tariff and the scheduled flights, is that we are now able to avoid backtracking by flying first into Amman and returning directly from Cairo.

Commencing in the ‘rose red’ city of Petra with a stay of two nights, we then make the short drive to the port of Aqaba for the hydrofoil service to Nuweiba on Sinai. Here we stay for two nights of relaxation by visits to the Coloured Canyon and the Monastery of St Catherine. We then cross the Sinai to the Suez Canal and on to Cairo and three nights at the famous 5-star Mena House Hotel. See the Pyramids, the Sphinx and the treasures of Tutankhamun at the Egyptian Museum before flying home directly from Cairo.

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TRAVELLERS' BULLETIN BOARD

It's a bit late in the day

Last-minute bargain hunters may be in for a shock, reports Jeannette Hyde

Leaving the booking of your family holiday until the last minute could result in disappointment, travel companies claimed this week.

They say they have more potential customers than packages left on sale, and those that are available are rising in price. The strong pound, which makes eating, drinking and going out in many resorts cheaper than in several years, has prompted people to book ahead. Turkey, Greece and Spain are all excellent value for Britons this summer.

Thomas Cook reports that package-holiday prices have risen 4 per cent in the past week. Going Places is predicting further jumps in the next ten days as tour operators seek to cash in on late bookers who are keen to escape the poor British weather.

Peter Shanks, managing director of Going Places, says: "There were some very low prices around in May and June and people are expecting cheap prices now, but that is not going to happen."

"The weather is miserable and the long-range forecast is not any better. If you link this with the strong pound, it is likely that package prices will go up."

Mike Beaumont, commercial manager of Thomas Cook, agrees. "For August, demand will outstrip supply. Prices are going up," he says.

The main areas with packages left are Turkey, Tunisia and the Dominican Republic, according to Thomas Cook. Turkey is a bargain when you get there. There are about 425,000 Turkish lira to the pound — making the country 14 per cent cheaper than last year for Britons.

In many countries the price of a beer has gone down, according to a Thomas Cook holiday living index. In Cyprus



The strength of the pound against European currencies means that holidays in places such as Mykonos, Greece, are excellent value

you now pay £1.20 compared to £1.75 in 1995, but getting there could be problematic as most charter airline seats have already been sold.

Richard Carrick, deputy managing director of Airtours, confirms his company is planning to raise prices in the next few days. "There will be a shortage of late availability

and it will be more expensive than if you had booked from the brochure," he says.

Although he says Airtours has some availability left in parts of Spain as well as limited space in Florida, he warns that it may be a case of taking what is offered.

If you want to travel from a regional airport your chances

of getting what you want are even slimmer. Mr Beaumont explains: "Most of the availability left is for Garwick and Manchester because the regionals have smaller capacity and have sold very well. If you want to get away you may have to move from your preferred airport."

Holidays to the Far East re-

main a bargain as airlines and hotels attempt to fill the gaps left by Asian tourists, suffering under the financial crisis.

The weak currency in Thailand has made it a particular favourite for Britons this year, while cheap packages to Indonesia are readily available as prices fall to lure customers back after the rioting. Australia

has also been hit by a downturn in the number of visitors from the Far East, so cheap deals are available for British visitors. It is good value once you get there, too, with a pound buying about A\$2.5.

Going Places is opening its 700 shops tomorrow in response to the sudden rush to buy holidays.

Blue Flag, black mark

I SUPPOSE I should be grateful that in the sea at Stages, in Spain, I could at least see the rubbish and take evasive action (see page 28). I was particularly surprised, however, because we were swimming off Playa de la Ribera, one of Spain's 573 Blue Flag beaches (Britain has 44), and one of the criteria for a Blue Flag award is, of course, clean water.

I asked the authorities that administer the scheme in Spain how this could happen, and was pleasantly surprised by how seriously they took my

complaint. I soon had a call from José Sanchez Moro, president of Adeac, the association which administers the Blue Flag scheme in Spain, who promised to hold an immediate investigation.

He asked for the date I visited, in case unusual winds or currents had blown rubbish towards the beach, and he reassured me that water samples are regularly tested and the results then published in Spanish newspapers.

All very impressive. But, much as I am in favour of Blue Flags, what help are they if a beach that has one can still have all sorts of rubbish floating in the water?

THE Blue Flag scheme has its humble origins in 1987, when Britain had 17 beaches that met the criteria (we now have 44). Here, this Europe-wide scheme is administered by the Tidy Britain Group, whose spokeswoman recalled that when it started, things were so wonderfully disorganised that one British beach was simply called East of the Car Park, although apparently it has now

been renamed something a little snappier.

There was, dare I say, a certain charm to not knowing how dirty the seawater was. I spent many childhood holidays at Shoreham-by-Sea in Sussex and learnt to swim in the sea there. None of us gave a thought to water quality then. Today Shoreham has no Blue Flags and I would probably think twice before getting into the water.

TRIP WIRES



by Cath Urquhart TRAVEL EDITOR

BAR-HOPPERS in London have a trendy new watering hole. The Lobby bar at One Aldwych, the stylish hotel which opened last week. I popped in to raise a glass to them to find, unsurprisingly, a media crowd dressed in black sipping champagne among the bar's elegant pieces of art. There is only one problem. Next door is the Lyceum Theatre, playing host to comedian Steve Coogan, and his alter-egos Alan Partridge and Paul Calf beam their inane, billboard-size grins in through the bar's large picture windows.

BRITISH Airways Holidays this week revealed its customers' top ten long-haul destinations. Not for the first time, Florida is in the number one spot. What is more interesting is that the tour operator, which is linked to British Airways, also published a list of its cabin crews' top five holiday destinations. So if you are keen to avoid that stropy steward, or alternatively to track down that dispy pilot, here they are: Thailand, Cayman Islands, Dubai, Barbados and Antigua.

Bargains at the core of the Big Apple

Anita Peltonen looks at the many cut-price deals in New York City

NEW YORK is set to become a budget traveller's paradise this summer, with the introduction of an unlimited-ride pass for the subway and buses, along with a huge roster of free events.

The new magnetic pass, introduced this month, allows unlimited travel within the city and costs £10 for seven days, or £39 for a month. It works in the same way as a London Underground pass, but without the zone restrictions, and you do not need a photograph to buy it. However, during the summer the pass can only be used once every 18 minutes.

Like its older sister, the Pay-Per-Ride MetroCard (which is debited each time you make a £1 trip), the new Unlimited Ride MetroCard is sold at subway stations and at 3,000 shops displaying gold MetroCard logos.

There are plenty of good cultural deals for visitors to New York on a tight budget. At the treasure-stocked Metropolitan Museum of Art, where a £5 entry charge is suggested but not insisted upon, there are at present exhibitions of works

by the British artist Edward Burne-Jones; Tiffany glass; and Native American art.

You can hear free classical music at the museum between 5pm and 8pm on Fridays, and enjoy its spectacular views over Central Park — also for nothing.

Then there is the free Mondays-at-sunset film series, which includes American classics such as *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, being shown at Bryant Park on 42nd Street/6th Avenue. There is a restaurant on site and plenty of delis nearby, but you should arrive early to secure a good picnic spot.

Still in the great outdoors, free entertainment is on offer during August at Manhattan's great green lung, Central Park. Summerstage, its busiest venue, has African and world music on Sundays, opera on Wednesdays, literary readings on Thursdays, dance on Fridays and vocalists on Saturdays.

Details of these events and many more of the cut-price activities can be found on the website <http://www.newyork.citysearch.com> which is updated every day.

Will Britannia rule the waves again?



The venerable QE2, now approaching its 30th anniversary, may be about to get a sister Gary Buchanan reports on the projected launch of the largest passenger liner ever, big sister to the QE2

THE 30-year old liner *Queen Elizabeth 2* is to have a sister vessel and *Britannia* is emerging as a possible name, it was revealed this week. Under the title of "Project *Queen Mary*" — in reference to what is possibly Cunard's best-known ship, now permanently moored in Long Beach, California — the Carnival Corporation, which bought Cunard Line two months ago, has drawn up plans for the new liner, likely to be the largest passenger ship ever to set sail when she is launched in 2002.

Given the launch of Princess' Cruises 109,000-ton *Grand Princess* last month, and the imminent arrival of Royal Caribbean International's first Eagle Class ship at 135,000 tons, this new ship may well weigh in at twice the size of the QE2. However, its tonnage and passenger capacity is not yet known. Carnival has realised the potential of Cunard's 158 years of maritime heritage, and is determined to launch a liner that will be the epitome of everything that Cunard Line stands for.

There are no plans to scrap QE2, but as she approaches the 30th anniversary of her maiden voyage in May 1969, Cunard Line desperately needs a replacement to ensure that it stays at the forefront of luxury cruising. QE2 is currently the only liner making scheduled transatlantic crossings, and the new ship is also expected to make regular appearances on the Southampton-New York route.

rupted with *RMS Queen Mary*, *RMS Queen Elizabeth* and QE2. Now that the Royal Yacht has been decommissioned, the name *Britannia* would be popular, especially as that was the name of Samuel Cunard's first ship in 1840.

The recent acquisition of Cunard by Carnival, the world's largest cruise company, is already making waves in the luxury cruising business. The QE2 and *Vistafjord* will continue to sail under the Cunard Line name, while the highly rated *Royal Viking Sun* and the two yacht-like vessels, *Sea Goddess I* and *II*, will become part of Seabourn Cruise Line.

Industry sources hint that these three will change their names to fall into line with the *Seabourn Pride*, *Seabourn Spirit* and *Seabourn Legend* trio. *Seabourn Viking* is tipped as the new name for the *Royal Viking Sun*. The *Sea Goddesses* and the *Royal Viking Sun* are expected to change their registry from the Bahamas to Norway, and the *Vistafjord* is expected to change its Bahamian flag to a British one.

The new sister ship to QE2 could be registered in Liverpool, as the *Queen Mary* was. However, it will not be built in Britain, which no longer has a shipyard large enough for such a project. Norway, Finland, Germany and Italy are front-runners to secure the contract.

Last year, Cunard extended the QE2's transatlantic schedule to give six nights at sea on each crossing rather than five, thus ensuring a more predictable arrival time and a smoother passage. The ship has also been refurbished twice in the past four years and is due for a further refurbishment next year.

NICE AND EASY

LOW-cost airline easyJet has defended its decision to offer an £18.75 single fare from Athens to London, while charging at least £69 for passengers flying from the UK.

A spokesman for the Luton-based airline, which cuts out travel agents, said: "We have been offering the cheaper fare in Athens to kick-start the market. We are a newcomer there. People traditionally book through a travel agent in Greece and do not have credit cards." The company's chairman, Stelios Haji-Ioannou, has been keen to pioneer a route to his home country. Cuning British passengers can obtain the lower prices on their return trip by booking that segment of their journey when they get to Greece.

On September 18, easyJet will start flying to Belfast with single fares from £19 excluding tax, and is planning to add Alicante, Faro, Madrid and Malaga soon.

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TRAVEL JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

London oddities

Get hold of a copy of 101 London Oddities by J. Edward Hart (J.R. Stallwood Publications, £4.99) and you'll unearth bits of the capital that most tourists (and even many residents) never reach. You will be introduced to London's smallest house, No. 10 Hyde Park Place, its smallest pub, the Nag's Head off Knightsbridge, and the narrowest thoroughfare, Emerald Court off Theobalds Road, which is only 27 inches wide.

Other oddities include the "cherubs on the phone" alongside Temple Gardens on Victoria Embankment, the two-way pillarbox by the gate of Chelsea Royal Hospital (the extra slot can be reached from inside the railings), and the controversial Jacob Epstein nude of Achilles at Hyde Park Corner. The book also explains the origins of the names of places such as Piccadilly and Shavers Place.

Stay on track in Spain

A new Explorerail pass on Spanish Railways from youth specialist Campus Travel (0171-730 3402) opens up towns, cities and resorts that are well off the beaten coastal track. Using the national RENFE network, you can visit Galicia's great university and pilgrimage centre, Santiago de Compostela — the Oxford of Iberia.

Proudly Castilian, Segovia, walled Avila and El Greco's Toledo provide relief from the summer furnace that is Madrid, and further north, Burgos, with its mighty Gothic cathedral, Logroño, centre of the Rioja wine-growing district, and Pamplona, oozing off after the bull-running, are also accessible.

For young people under 26, students under 30 and accompanying spouses and children, seven days' unlimited rail travel costs about £73. 15 days costs £89 and 30 days £118. The pass is not valid on high-speed trains.

Wild about life

If you go down to the woods between July 25 and August 9, you could be in for some big surprises. Pond-dipping and mini-beast hunting (better known as nature walks, led by a wildlife expert who will identify forest animals), toddler trails, drystone-wall courses, off-road biking and drama are just some of the activities being held as part of a Forest Fever fortnight of Fun in 12 of England's community forests in and around urban areas.

The aim is "to encourage children and adults to get involved in their environment", says the Countryside Commission which, along with the Forestry Commission, is supporting the scheme.

To find out what's going on in your neck of the woods, call 0800 0684968 (operates from today until August 17).

THE Passenger Shipping Association has compiled a Luxury Cruising fact sheet listing the most opulent (and expensive) cruise lines and ships. It also describes what you should expect in return for your bundles of cash



Tourists are taken through a Marrakesh market by their official guide; others posing as guides have prompted police to set up "tourist brigades" to tackle the problem

— such as 24-hour cabin service, walk-in wardrobes and small group excursions. But such pampering doesn't come cheap. Expect to pay £12,000-£15,000 for a 14-day cruise; flights are extra.

There'll be more of the Good Life afloat in the next few years with the launch of new ships for Radisson Seven Seas and Silversea Cruises, and the new vessel planned by Cunard (see opposite page).

At least the fact sheet is free. Call the Passenger Shipping Association's Cruise Information Service (0171-436 2449).

Mammal magic

The last of the Continent's great land mammals, the magnificent but endangered stagsy European bison, still has a foothold in the

ancient 781sq-mile Bialowieza Forest, a Unesco World Heritage site in north-eastern Poland. Wild boar, lynx and wolf — absent from most parts of Europe — maintain healthy populations too.

This is mainly because communism's low-intensity farming techniques preserved wildlife habitats lost in other places, claims naturalist David Mills, the owner of Naturetrek (01962 73305), which is organising a trip there departing on September 4.

The ten-day tour also takes to the water on the Biebrza marshes in the hope of spotting beaver at close quarters, and does some serious birdwatching around the sandbanks and dunes of the Vistula River estuary, which is seldom visited by tourists. It costs £895, including flights, accommodation, all meals and an expert guide.

Tyred eyes

If you're a driver who likes to break on long journeys, and you are heading for the Mediterranean this summer, you can get a free map of alternative routes along picturesque roads. By avoiding toll roads, you'll save £80. If you are heading down the Paris-Rhône-Rhône motorway, free tyre checks and free eye and reflex tests are offered at rest areas and service stations. Call France Information on 0891 244123 (50p a minute) for details.

Ashes bashes

If there are any fans of English cricket left, they can follow the

team's fortunes Down Under as they try to win back the Ashes this winter, on a variety of tours from Travel Portfolio (01284 762255).

Holidaymakers can travel as part of an escorted group, or on a tailor-made itinerary. A 20-day trip departing on November 17, to watch the first Test (Nov 20-24) in Brisbane, and the second in Perth (Nov 28-Dec 2), costs £1,290 per person which includes flights, transfers, three-star room-only accommodation and sightseeing, based on two people sharing. Tickets for games, which will be available from next month, cost about £25 for a one-day match and £100 for a five-day Test.

Moroccan muscle

Aware of the bad publicity caused by hustlers posing as guides and

wanting to sell visitors tacky souvenirs, the Moroccan authorities have set up police "tourist brigades" to crack down on the problem.

The scheme has been effective at ports and rail stations in Tangier and the marketplaces of Marrakesh, some of the worst blackspots according to Don Grubbook, who has recently returned from researching a new edition of the Rough Guide to Morocco (£11.99). As part of the crackdown, authorities are advising holidaymakers to hire qualified guides from tourist offices or hotels. The rate is £8 for a half-day for small groups (plus a tip).

Travel articles in The Times since last January are on our Internet site. See "Most Recent" links on <http://www.the-times.co.uk>



Odd job: the sculpture of famed orange-seller Nell Gwynne, found in Chelsea, is just one of 101 London Oddities

PACK YOUR BAGS

Have a romantic weekend in London. A "Bubble and Squeak" break at the Montague (0171-637 1001) in Bloomsbury is £225 per night. The cost includes a suite with Jacuzzi, champagne, flowers, chocolate and a massage kit. Alternatively, the Chesterfield (0171-491 2622) in Mayfair is offering a "suite dream weekend". The package includes champagne, canapés and films on demand. One night's B&B is £250 per night for a junior suite, and £295 for an executive suite.

If you want to travel to Canada before September 30, contact Air Canada (0990 247226). Return flights from Heathrow to St Johns, Halifax, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa are £369 Mon-Thurs and £399 at weekends. Return flights from Heathrow to Vancouver, Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton are £399 weekdays and £429 weekends. Tickets must be bought by August 5.

JOANNA HUNTER

FLYING VISITS		
Departures: Monday July 20 to Saturday July 25, 1998		
Lowest available published fares for return travel.		
Route	Promotional Fare	Flexible Fare
London - Amsterdam	from £58 easyJet (ex-Luton)	£145 Transavia (ex-Gatwick)
London - Athens	£118 easyJet (ex-Luton)	£80 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London - Copenhagen	£77 SAS (ex-Heathrow)	from £150 Go (ex-Stansted)
London - Dublin	£59 Air Lingus	£119 Air Lingus
London - Glasgow	£58 KLM UK (ex-Stansted)	£156 KLM UK (ex-Stansted)
London - Southampton	£59 Malmo Aviation (ex-London City)	£499 Malmo Aviation (ex-London City)
London - Lisbon	from £102 AB Airlines (ex-Gatwick)	£398 AB Airlines (ex-Gatwick)
London - Moscow	£300 SAS (ex-Heathrow/Stansted)	£802 BA (ex-Heathrow/Stansted)
London - Rome	from £100 Go (ex-Stansted)	£180 Go (ex-Stansted)
Birmingham - Birmingham	£75 AB Airlines	£250 AB Airlines

Airline telephone numbers:
 AB Airlines 0900 4588111 KLM UK 0990 074074
 Air Lingus 0181-869 4747 Malmo Aviation 0171-473 3043
 British Airways (BA) 0345 222111 SAS 0645 60727727
 Go 08456 054321 Transavia 01293 596850
 easyJet 0870 8000000

Notes:
 * Prices shown in the left-hand column are the lowest published excursion fares. Prices shown in the right-hand column are the lowest available flexible fares which do not require a Saturday night stay and which, in many cases, allow changes to be cancelled without penalty. In all cases you are advised to check the restrictions, if any, when booking.
 * Availability is not guaranteed.
 * Fares with Go include tax. Other fares shown exclude tax.

TRAVELLERS' TIP

Take the empty cardboard cylinders left over from kitchen rolls on holiday with you. It's a great way to bring back those eye-catching prints. Roll gently and place in the cylinder and the prints will be ready for framing when you get home.

When travelling with your children, always carry photographs of them with you. If you get split up, showing a photograph to police and officials is more effective than trying to describe your child. I briefly lost my daughter in



Florida which I'll never forget. — Mr G Evans, Tenby. Send your suggestion, in no more than 75 words, on a postcard to: Travellers' Tip, The Times Travel Desk, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN, with your name, address and day-time telephone number. If yours is published, you will win the Lonely Planet guidebook and phrase book of your choice.

ROMAN AFRICA

A VOYAGE THROUGH ANTIQUITY FROM MALTA TO ALEXANDRIA ABOARD THE 'MONET' 2ND TO 11TH NOVEMBER 1998

In both Libya and Tunisia there are wonderful Roman sites which, in the main, are little visited and yet some of the most splendid and varied remains of the Roman World.

The Roman city of Leptis Magna, birthplace of Septimius Severus is reached on a full day excursion from Tripoli. This is an extraordinary site, with its enormous Basilica and Forum. In Tunisia we will visit the Phoenician city of Carthage which was destroyed in 149 B.C. but rebuilt by Julius Caesar and Augustus to its former glory.

Modern history will not be ignored and visits to El Alamein and Tobruk will bring the North African Campaign vividly to life.

Our voyage will end in ancient Alexandria and we will drive to Giza for an overnight stay close to the Pyramids.

MY MONET

The 'Monet' has been specifically designed for inland sea and coastal cruising, recognising the increasing demand for small, comfortable vessels. Obviously, she offers a very different experience to that provided aboard the large resort style ships. There are no floor shows or entertainment staff that are found on larger vessels. What you will find is a superbly run ship offering excellently prepared meals and with only a maximum of 56 passengers.

Spacious passenger cabins are located over three decks and have outside views. They are finished with beautiful hardwoods and quality fabrics and offer TV, VCR, music, telephone, climate control, generous wardrobe space, private shower and bathroom. Other facilities include: single sitting dining, large comfortable lounge and bar, shop, fitness room and clinic. On the Sun Deck there is a Jacuzzi and splash pool and spacious areas for relaxing and reading.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London Heathrow to Malta with Air Malta. Embark in the late afternoon and sail.
 Day 2 Tunisia. Morning at sea. Drive to the ruins of ancient Carthage. See the theatre, amphitheatre and Antonine Baths and then move on to the more recent excavations which have brought to light remains from the Phoenician period.
 Day 3 Sousse. Arrive in the morning and drive to El Djem with its glorious amphitheatre and to the charming fortress town of Mahdia. Afternoon at sea.
 Day 4 Tripoli. Firstly visit the excellent Tripoli Museum, followed by a walk around Tripoli Castle. During the afternoon explore the old quarter with its fascinating souks and see the Arch

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'B'	Double Bedded on Lumiere Deck	£1795
'A'	Double Bedded on Lumiere Deck	£1895
'S'	Single Cabin on Camille or Lumiere Deck	£1995

Price includes: Economy class air travel, 8 nights aboard the 'Monet' on full board, overnight stay at Giza on half board basis, lunch on day 9, port taxes, transfers, UK departure tax, airport taxes.
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Safety first in Florida

Visitors to Orlando are being urged to keep their hotel rooms locked following the rape attack on a British couple in Florida earlier this week. The couple were attacked at gunpoint after leaving the door to their room open while waiting for staff to bring them an iron. They were staying at the 130-room La Suite Inn in Kissimmee, a few miles east of Disney World.

Diana Lamplugh, director of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Britain's national charity for personal safety, said: "Florida has had its problems and just because you are in the rosy glow of arriving on holiday and maybe suffering from jet lag does not mean you can forget about security.

"Keep your hotel room door closed and ask who is there before opening it. If your door has a chain, use it. I was horrified to hear that this couple had left their door open. When you are on holiday you think nothing can happen to you. You need to recognise that you are in a foreign country and you must be as vigilant as you would be at home."

She also advised holidaymakers to ask quietly for their room key at reception so as to avoid strangers finding out their room number.

News of the British couple attacked in Orlando should make visitors more vigilant, says Jeannette Hyde

The Foreign Office is not ruling against travel to Florida, but does advise caution. Nev Johnson, a spokesman, said: "We have not changed our advice in the light of this incident because we have not been able to talk to the couple concerned yet. We need the full facts before issuing new advice."

"Florida is the only US state where we do issue specific advice because tourists are targeted by the local criminal element. The instances of Britons being involved in violent incidents are quite considerable."

Existing FO advice warns travellers to be vigilant about personal security following a number of muggings and highway attacks during the past few years. Although you may feel put off travelling

to the theme parks around Orlando after reading about the incident, holiday companies are fairly inflexible.

Jackie Gibson, spokeswoman for the Association of British Travel Agents, said: "The customer has no right to cancel and receive a refund unless the Foreign Office reviews its advice."

"More than one and a half million British visitors go to Florida each year and you have to put the numbers of people encountering problems into perspective."

Nicola McShane, a spokeswoman for the tour operator Thomson, said that customers wanting to change their holiday plans could do so if they were uncomfortable about staying in Florida, but an amendment fee would have to apply. The company is re-emphasising security to customers in the welcome address given by holiday reps at hotels around Orlando: "In the case of Florida we already advise guests to take precautions because there have been incidents of crime there before."

● The Suzy Lamplugh Trust this week launched a website with security tips on more than 230 countries. Find it at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/worldwise>

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 Travel up to 30th Sept
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 or see your local Travel Agent

Gentle Gozo, a hard habit to break

Even the nuns take it easy on this quiet island in the Mediterranean, as David Charter soon discovered



On particularly hot days in Gozo, the nuns of St Francis exchange their customary white habits for vestments dyed a deep Mediterranean blue. Emerging from their convent into sheltered Xwienet Bay, they wade into the warm water and soak for an hour, their robes flowing round them.

It is a summer ritual that seems to sum up the hidden charm of the tiny, nine-by-four-and-a-half-mile, green and hilly retreat which, only half-an-hour by ferry from Malta, could not provide a greater contrast to its fast-food and nightclub tourist culture.

Gozo is rich in history, legend and surprises in equal measure. High up in the cliffs on the impressive northern coastline you find Calypso's Cave, said to be where the immortal nymph imprisoned Odysseus for seven years in Homer's epic poem.

Fennel and capers grow wild up here, and from the top there is a great view of Ramla Bay, the best beach on the island, as well as the submerged wall of stone built just offshore by the Knights of St John against Turkish invaders.

All over this tiny island, which lies at the portals of Europe and Africa, are imprints left by the cultures that shaped its destiny. For British visitors these include the reassuring and sometimes quaint echoes of the Empire: the Gozians speak English, drive on the left, and still have red telephone boxes.

Inland from Calypso's Cave is another unexpected find: a ram-



Xlendi Bay on Gozo, only half-an-hour by ferry from Malta: the clear blue waters around the island make it a prime scuba-diving area

shackle stone structure said to be the oldest free-standing monument in the world. Ggantija, or Giant's Temple, comprises two ancient temples with a series of chambers built from enormous rocks. You can only guess at the rituals that would have been performed here nearly 2,000 years before Stonehenge.

Victoria, the capital, is dominated by an impressive citadel that unfortunately failed to save the inhabitants from being captured and led into slavery by the Turks in 1531.

Summer visitors are likely to find themselves caught up in happier events: the festivals held in every one of the island's 16 little towns in honour of its patron saint. Each town has its own marching band endeavouring to outdo its rivals for sheer exuberance and endurance

against a backdrop of celebratory firecrackers, which resonate across the island well into the night almost every weekend from May to September.

We stayed in a three-bedroom lodge converted, with three others, from a farmhouse near the village of Ghasri, all large and private enough for family groups. Despite its location down an unlit, unsealed road, it felt secure. We had our own small swimming pool and a well-equipped kitchen for self-catering.

When we had had enough of cooking, we were able to choose from the island's excellent fish restaurants, including the Paradise Bar in Xlendi Bay, which keeps in radio contact with its own fishing boat so the menu can be updated with the day's catch. For the more

adventurous there are the most celebrated dishes of Gozitan cuisine, not seafood, but rabbit in red wine sauce and beef rolled in veal.

Car hire was essential, as we were not keen to join the few making Gozo their mountain-biking holiday (particularly popular in spring when it is cooler and the place is awash with colourful flowers). To our delight, we found that the clear coastal waters of Gozo are a prime scuba-diving area.

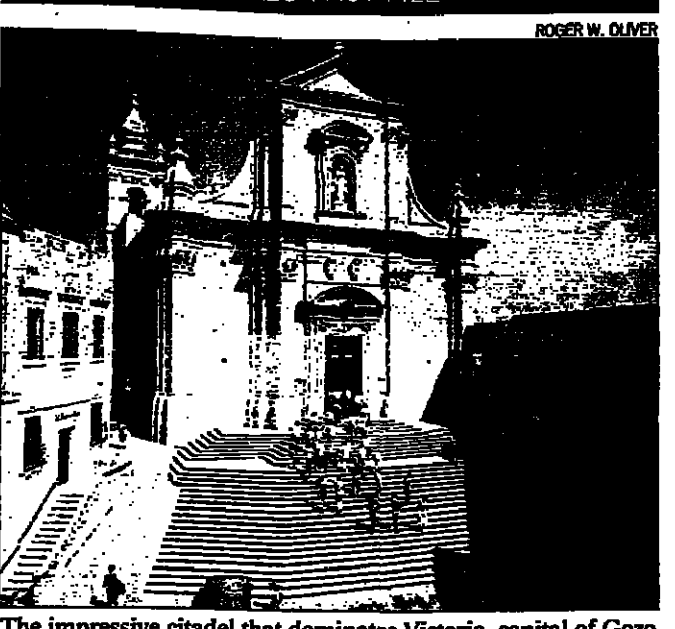
One of the oldest scuba centres is Calypso Diving School in Marsalforn, run by a local, George, who, despite his slightly insane appearance, took my nervous but enthusiastic companion methodically through the basics before leading her into the sea for an introductory lesson, with just the right amount

of coercion and support. Step by step she tried the mechanics of diving and then sampled the fun of it, feeling the sticking-plaster suckers of a small octopus George plucked from the sea floor in a cloud of black ink. Seahorses, barracuda and moray eels await more experienced divers just off Gozo's shores.

We did the reverse of most holidaymakers, heading over to Malta for a day trip, which with its modern attractions and faster pace, belonged to an entirely different world.

Another day was spent on a catamaran trip to the tiny islet of Comino for a snorkel in the shallow Blue Lagoon, whose waters are given their appealing turquoise colour

GOZO FACT FILE



The impressive citadel that dominates Victoria, capital of Gozo

David Charter travelled to Gozo with Meon Villas (01730 230370), which offers one and two-week holidays in a selection of villas, most with private pool. He stayed in the five-star Villa Razzet Perla, which costs from £646 per person, based on four sharing, until August 1. Prices include return flights from Gatwick, transfers, villa and car hire with unlimited mileage.

Prices for two weeks during the same period start at £902pp based on four sharing. Peak time for visitors is between June and August, when it is generally dry with temperatures averaging 30C. Heaviest rainfall is between October and January.

Guidebooks include *Malta and Gozo* in the Collins Traveller series (HarperCollins, £4.99); the Blue Guide *Malta and Gozo* (A&C Black, £9.99) and in the AA/Thomas Cook Travellers series *Malta and Gozo* (AA, £7.99).

Further information from the Malta Tourist Office, Malta House, 36-38 Piccadilly, London W1V 0PP (0171-292 4900).

by the white sand lying just metres below.

The gentle pace of Gozo gives the appearance of security but arriving back at our farmhouse after midnight on our penultimate night, we found the doors from the main room to the pool area open. A quick look confirmed our fears — there had been a break-in. The shutter doors had been wrenched open from the outside. All the drawers in the bedrooms had been opened but a personal stereo was missing.

Although it was now late, I just happened to be in the room, the owner of Gozo Farmhouses, the more upset than we were, saying he had never had a break-in before, and called the police for us. Three officers soon arrived, their curiosity also suggesting that burglaries

were indeed a rare event. Paul helped us file the necessary reports the following day. It did not take long or spoil the holiday, but it did end on a rather unhappy note.

That evening, with the festival of St George in full swing in Victoria, we bumped into the police chief with his two little daughters and chatted about our unexpected meeting in the early hours. He said it was the first incident of its kind he had dealt with.

Other British visitors we met obviously regarded Gozo as a special place. They talked of charming people, favourite restaurants and the relaxed pace of life. Certainly no one we encountered, from Gozo, the diver to the floating Franciscan nuns, did anything to prove them wrong.

CITY BREAKS

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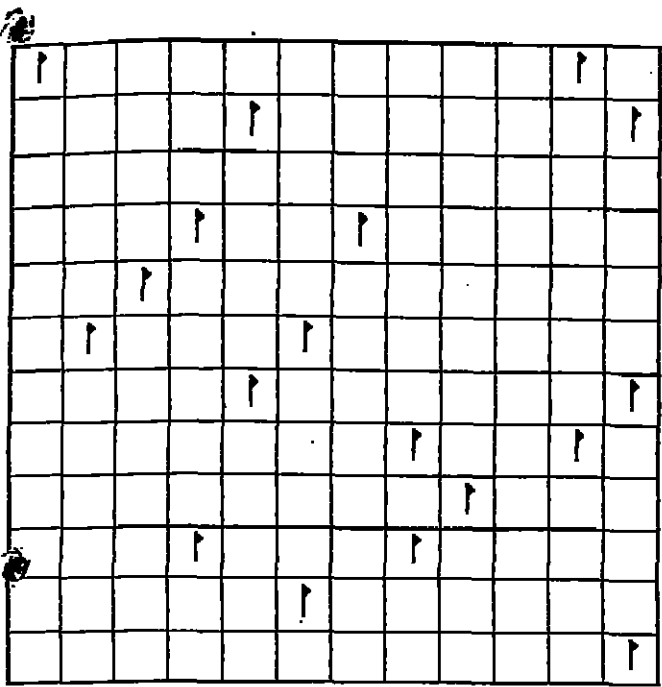
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THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No. 3471: The Open: 19th Hole by Loda



LISTENER CROSSWORD No 3471 in association with Waterstone's

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No 3471, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, by Thursday, July 30.



The winner will receive a Waterstone's book token worth £75. Five runners-up will each receive a book token worth £10



Waterstone's first opened a bookshop in 1982, and now has a branch in almost every major town and city in the UK and Ireland. Each of its 100+ odd branches has at least 50,000 titles in stock and can order any book currently in print in the UK. Out-of-Print Booksearch, 01892 527700, Mailing Service and Signed First Editions, 01225 448596. For your nearest branch of Waterstone's call 01225 448595.

FLAGS indicate the 18 holes of the golf course as it snakes through the field. There are nine outward holes (West course) and nine inward holes (East course). As usual the 1st and 10th tees and 9th and 18th holes are appropriately sited, convenient for dry spectators.

At the end of the game players must highlight this viewpoint (9 letters), locate the 19th hole within and mark its position with another flag.

All clues are normal. The 18 holes are shown in order of play and sometimes their direction necessitates reversal of answers. Remaining clues are listed in their normal order of appearance.

THE COURSE

- OUTWARD 9 HOLES (WEST) 1st Three from Trevino - European with five, note. 2nd Rocco's enthusiasm and unbounded zest's a bit overblown! 3rd British golfer's leader of field - I'm delirious. 4th Plant, S. American. Woods - the last three to go round. 5th Excellent chip from Brewer, Gay runs round, very active. 6th Birdie from Jack - Jack Little, stolid, humourless. 7th Nicklaus's admitted before teeing off "it's used for image purposes..." 8th ... notice he gets six in due course! 9th Conon's drive's sweet, skimming grass.

INWARD 9 HOLES (EAST)

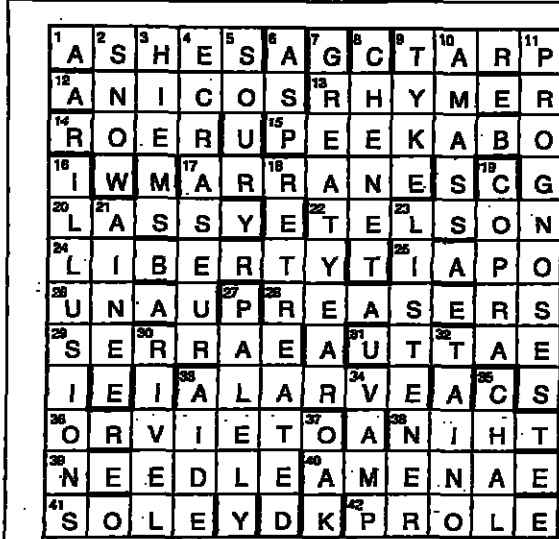
- 10th Comeback for Sandy Lyle - at last, no small contribution to action. 11th Player, who must catch the rest, is in for famous Croatian. 12th Latin American beat Indian, both missing "the cut". 13th Slice from Palmer - a "top notch", someone idolised once. 14th Short, caught by edge of bunker, does endless swings - faith's required. 15th Right away Price toes shot. 16th Brand seen by water - champion's usurped by finish, in a manner of speaking.

17th Charge caddy from Troon - chopped ground around Walker.

18th Calcavecchia's completely gutted - "ball's behind side of clubhouse and (adjective) tree."

OTHER CLUES

- Quick to take offence when beheaded? Unlikely. Serve pilot stewed cabbage in this? Banister, eg, fashioned from iron? Not practicable, elm. Tide for Asian prince is "King" with native Chinese. Radioactive mineral, I note, has disappeared - God! Wave away wasp - very active. They might be blind drunk - every clochard's imbibed meals in the van! "Caught on the Hop" - p.500. Mechanical Engineer gets into Escort strewn with bearings. Out of office, crooked insider's banned from residential re-building. Black hair's bobbed for clutch of parties. It describes: - a circle with a radius: constant note: the speed of light. Australian woman's league, supporter follows United. Hear confession to whipping bather's extremity. River insect left, has flown. Plant first of hyacinths for those with whom we share a border. County's borders abutted long ago. Hears nothing is scattered on land. Chap's contact e.g. Dull coloured bread roll's end sliced off. Empty out, disregarding my shot later. Hestiate and tip off baitful about weapon. Max's constant desire to hook. Talk nonsense on trips (essentially West Indian cake) Monkey's River Boards - they're used for surfing. Sharp pricking pain... strangeness... temperature - scabies. Order a starter of raw fish. Youngsters delivered by city doctor? Is unlikely. Struggle as far as Israel. Swimming pool, the location for this when water's entered first.



Solution and notes for No. 3468 Plays of the Bard - V by Salamanca

23 LISTENER follows 11 PROGNOSSES and 16 ILLU-SIONS ("He hearkens after prophecies and dreams").

The letter G was removed from an across answer of each line to form the grid entry, which was indicated by subsidiary part of clues ("And from the cross-row plucks the letter G": 1 (G)ASHES, 12 AN(G)ICUS, 14 RO(G)ER, 17 ARRAN(G)E, 20 (G)LASSY, 25 (G)APO, 28 (G)RASERS, 31 (G)UTTAE, 33 AL(G)ARVE, 38 NI(G)HT, 40 AMENA(G)E, 42 PROLE(G)).

The Richards (entered "unfinish'd" and "deform'd") were: 9a PARTY, 29a ERASERS, 36a OVERTOIL, 6d PASH, 8d TENCHES, 27d PLAYLET, 30d LIVERY, 32d NATION, 33d R.JEAL.

The winner is Dr R.J. Bell, Hampton, Middx.

The runners-up are Alan Hollinghurst, London NW3; R.E. Boot, Ealing, London W5; T.M. Crowther, Winchester, Hants; Dr D.R. Laney, Lymington, Exmouth; A.K. Jobbins, Shipley, W. Yorks.

BRIDGE by Robert Sheehan

MANY American sports have a Hall of Fame in which great players are honoured. The American Contract Bridge League's version has been going for about four years. I was pleased to see my old friend and mentor Billy Eisenberg was one of the nine luminaries elected in 1998, and even more pleased to see that he was one of the three still living. He has won the Bermuda Bowl five times with four different partners.

In the Bols Liqueurs bridge tip competition, Eisenberg's contribution was about putting pressure on the third player by playing low from dummy on the opening lead.

As he pointed out, most declarers realise the advantage of playing low when the opening lead is through dummy's unsupported king, with the declarer being short in the suit. The ace is almost certainly over the king, and by ducking you may eventually bring down the ace.

However, there are other situations in which ducking can gain. One of his examples is shown at the top of the next column.

Eisenberg was South. His Two Diamonds call over North's strong No-trump was a transfer bid, showing at least five hearts. He explains that he went on to Six Clubs over North's Five Clubs because his team was behind in the match (the trials to select the 1977 US team).

When West led a low diamond, Eisenberg played low from dummy, which gave East a difficult decision. In practice he put in the queen, and so after ruffing and

Bridge hand diagram showing cards in North, South, East, and West hands. North: ♠KJ85, ♥Q4, ♦KJ42, ♣AQT. South: ♠109642, ♥J7, ♦10653, ♣102. West: ♠A73, ♥K92, ♦AQ87, ♣84. East: ♠Q, ♥A10853, ♦, ♣KJ9653.

Bridge score table: W N E S, NT Pass 2D, 2H Pass 3C, 3NT Pass 4C, 5C Pass 6C, All Pass.

Contract: Six Clubs by South. Lead: the three of diamonds

crossing to the ace of clubs declarer was able to lead the king of diamonds, ruff out East's ace, cross to dummy with a second club, discard the queen of spades on the jack of diamonds and concede a heart, to make his contract.

What if West had led from the queen of diamonds? Then it might appear that playing the jack of diamonds from dummy at trick one is the winning play.

But as Eisenberg points out, in that case after declarer has played low from dummy East will have a tough play, to put in the ten of diamonds from say A10xx. And if East has AQ, playing low at trick one is declarer's only chance.

WORD ANSWERS

- Answers from page 36 LADINO (c) A large, fast growing variety of white clover, native to northern Italy and cultivated elsewhere as a fodder crop. MOLA (a) A square of brightly coloured appliquéd cloth worn as a blouse by Cuna Indian women of the San Blas Islands, Panama. "The mola tops have been introduced by the Spaniards who didn't like the women walking around with their breasts showing."

- NERF (c) In drag racing, to bump another car. Hence nerf-bar, a bumper fitted to a car used in drag racing. HUARACHE (a) A leather-thonged sandal, originally worn by Mexican Indians. TWO BRAINS Answers from page 36 Question 1 Titus. Question 2 The maximum possible is 8. One solution is a4, b6, c8, d2, e7, f1, g3 and h5.

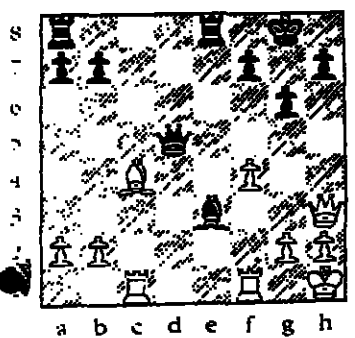
CHESS

by Raymond Keene

ALTHOUGH I have published all the games of the match between Alexei Shirov and Vladimir Kramnik in the daily column, I revert today to the critical situations from the two wins which brought Shirov his victory by 5½-3½.

It was interesting to observe that Shirov's match strategy was to keep the situations open and fluid, thus giving maximum rein to his talents in attack and combination. While I would not characterise this as a great match, since Kramnik's resistance was uninspired, Shirov's two victories were certainly of the highest quality. In both cases, games four and nine, he utilised tactical threats to drive Kramnik into inferior endgames.

White: Alexei Shirov; Black: Vladimir Kramnik. Candidates Match (Game 4), Cazoria 1998.



Black's queen is under attack and if he plays the natural 21... Qd2, hoping for a counter-attack, then White has the devastating tactical riposte 22 Bxf7 - Kx17 23 Rxf7. For that reason Black seeks refuge in an inferior endgame.

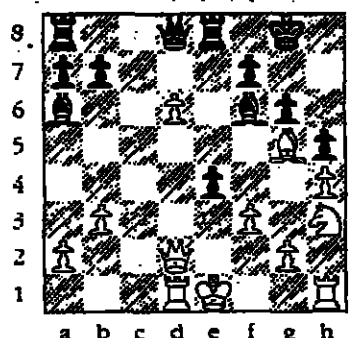
21 ... Qf5 22 Qxf5 gxf5 23 Rcd1 Rcd8 24 a3 Bxh2 25 Bf6 Bf6 26 Bf5 Rsd1 27 Rxd1 Rd8 28 Rcl Rd5 29 a4 Bd8 30 Rc8 Kg7 31 Rb8 Bb6

Perhaps dying in with 31... a3 32 Rc2 Rd7 33 Bf6 b6 would have been a better defence.

White has now achieved a decisive material advantage and only has to be careful that Black does not sacrifice his bishop for both white pawns, when rook and bishop against rook is

a theoretical draw. Black finally resigned on move 63.

White: Vladimir Kramnik; Black: Alexei Shirov. Candidates Match (Game 9), Cazoria 1998.



Here, White's king is pinned down in the centre and his development is obviously suspect. However, Kramnik has pinned his faith to the power of his passed d-pawn, which he now tries to exploit.

21 d7 Qb6 A stunning response which simply ignores White's threats in the interests of driving a direct path towards White's king.

22 dxe8+ Rxe8 23 Qe3 Bg6 If White tries to stay a rook ahead with 24 Qe5 then it is mate after 24... exd3 25 Kd2 Qd4+ 26 Kcl Qal+ 27 Kc2 Rb8+ 28 Kd2 Qc3.

24 Qxb6 Bxh4+ 25 Kd2 If 25 Qf2 exf3+ wins.

25 Kc2 axb6 26 Bc4 Rxe4 27 Rg1 Rf4 28 Rd2 Be7 29 Nd3 Kf7 30 Nf2 Rf4 31 Nd3 Rf4 32 Rgd1 Bb5

Technically the material balance is level, but Black's bishop pair act like a machinegun against White's pawn weaknesses.

33 a4 Bc6 34 Rcl Rxe1 35 Nxe1 Bb4 36 Re2 Bxe1 37 Rxe1 Bxg2 38 Kd2 f4

Black has given up the bishop pair but now his armada of pawns on the kingside is invincible.

39 Ke3 Bd5 40 b4 h3 41 Re2 f5 42 Rd2 Be4 43 Kf4 Bg2 44 Rd7+ Kf6 45 Rh7

If 45 Rd6+ Ke7 and Black's h-pawn will promote.

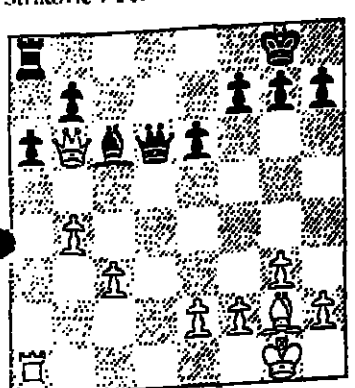
45 ... g5+ 46 Kg3 f4+ 47 Kg4 Ke5 48 b5

White resigns.

WINNING MOVE

by Raymond Keene

WHITE to play. This position is from the game Strikovic Pereira, Portugal 1998.



It looks as if White may have a small edge at most in this position. In fact his next move won the game immediately. What did he play?

The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society. Answers on a postcard please addressed to Winning Move competition, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last week's competition: 1 Rh8+

The winner is Roger Watson of West Yorkshire.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



Madcap Frank Zappa left his crazy legacy even in death

THE epitaph on the grave of rock star Frank Zappa is AAAFNGR, which stands for Always Assing Around For No Good Reason. In the original His Master's Voice picture of Nipper the Dog listening to the RCA gramophone, both were placed on his dead master's casket to imply that the gramophone was "the closest thing to his dead master's voice". It was amended when RCA bosses deemed it too morbid.

You probably already know both of the above. But how are you on Kermit the Frog? He was named after Kermit Scott, a childhood pal of Muppet creator Jim Henson who became a professor of philosophy.

And what of aviation trivia? Did you know that the wingspan of a Boeing 747 jet is longer than the Wright brothers' first flight?

Doubtless you are fully aware of the meaning of the lyrics in Don Maclean's hit, American Pie. "Drove my Chevy to the Levoy but the Levoy was dry. Them good old boys were drinking whisky in Rye." Contrary to popular understanding, the Levoy was a bar while Rye is a small city in New York.

Deb and Jen's Land O'Useless Facts (<http://www.lanland.stanford.edu/jenk/ueless.html>) is a site

packed with ridiculous facts. Deb and Jen are Debora Henigson and Jennifer Goodwin, students at Stanford University who have shared jokes and useless facts since high school. They started the site in November 1995 and it blossomed when Yahoo dubbed it "cool". The duo, both in their early twenties, sift new entries for posting at

thesis or your inaugural address until you have verified them to your own. The reason they do not check the facts is simple. "We have lives," they said.

Some entries carry the name, city and e-mail address of their submitters, others appear without any other details or qualification.

Bruce Leyden of Dundee is credited with the following: "The full name of the UK is The United Kingdom of Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Berwick-upon-Tweed". The reason for this is that Berwick-upon-Tweed has historically been a disputed border town between England and Scotland, and was so constitutionally enshrined as a separate entity. Until 1987, Berwick-upon-Tweed was officially at war with Germany, due to war being declared with the full title, but desisted with only the partial one. The problem was solved and they are now at peace."

A SITE in a similar mould is Absolutely Positively Useless (<http://www.bitworks.co.nz/trivia/index.html>). Based in New Zealand, it also took off after Yahoo gave it a "cool site" award.

Here the weird and wonderful are segregated into sections under

different headings - earth and space, arts and entertainment, sports and recreation, human body and so on. In earth and space we learn that it snowed in the Sahara on February 18, 1979. From arts and entertainment we are told that Salvador Dali arrived for the opening of an art exhibition in a limousine filled with turnips. Ludwig van Beethoven was once arrested for vagrancy and the Guinness Book of Records holds the record for being the book most often stolen from British public libraries. Human body facts include blond beards growing faster than darker beards and from the age of 30 humans gradually shrink in size.

Just like Deb and Jen. Absolutely Positively Useless carries a disclaimer about the accuracy of its facts although it does try checking them. The site also recommends parental guidance since it may carry information "deemed unsuitable for younger viewers".

CROSS WORDS

Solutions from page 36 Post-mortem: readdress; casino; season

NEW SOFTWARE

BRITAIN IS not a nation of shopkeepers but a nation of football managers, which is why millions of us chipped in our two-pennorth over the David Beckham debate.

Many of us harbour managerial football opinions, with views about which teams should be picked and what tactics they should adopt in matches.

Add to this mix the business concerns of running a football empire and you have the formula for Ultimate Soccer Manager 98.

The latest version of Sierra's title uses the same familiar engine with a liberal scattering of fine-tuning. Most football management sims are a number-cruncher's dream, with a mass of fixture lists, statistics and balance sheets to consume while overseeing the day-to-day running of your club and players.

You decide how much minutiae you can handle and start steering your team to ultimate glory - or disaster so dismal that you will be sacked at the season's end.

The title boasts a fine tactic editor, so you can experiment with your own stratagem to deliver good football and spell-binding goals.

The business simulated bureaucracy is presented with clarity and although the actual games are nothing much to look at, they are practical at illustrating your team's progress, strengths and weaknesses.

Verdict: 8 out of 10. Smart update of smooth soccer management sim. £34.99.

DESPITE a dearth of clones in every genre, the games industry is becoming more sophisticated.

Now, like never before, a title must have an immediate thrill



Bring out the manager in you

factor, some spontaneous little trick to hook the player and implant the promise of good gameplay ahead. Without it, it is difficult to begin the course let alone go the full distance. Sadly, Cryo Interactive's Ubik lacks anything special up front and too quickly descends into yet another copycat sci-fi adventure. You put together a squad of fighters and then inch them through multi-level universes with laborious mouse clicks.

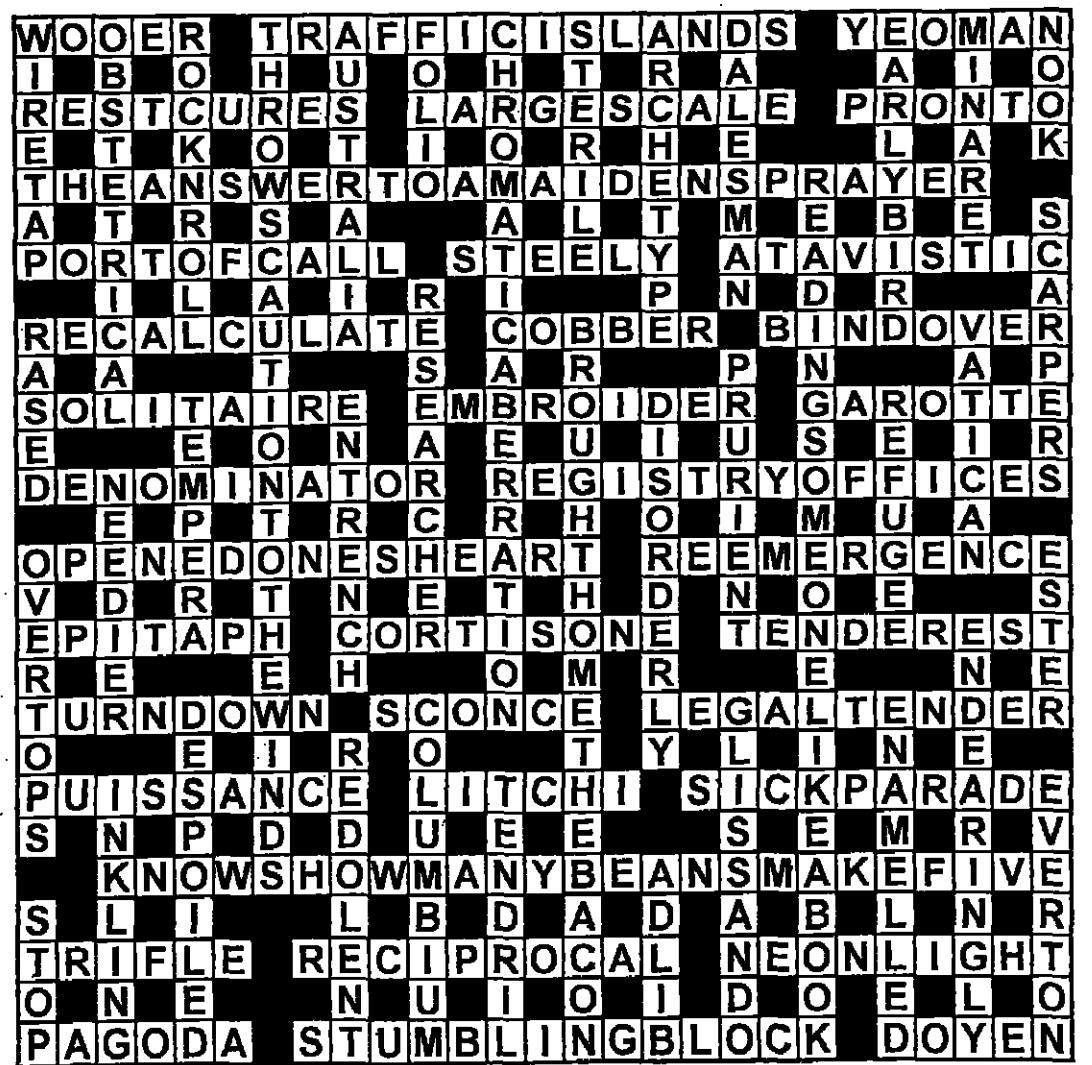
This is a battle against faceless corporations and their evil forces embroiled in industrial espionage. There are more than 100 characters to interrogate for clues and advice by more mouse clicking.

Fuelling the graphics are a mix of styles which sit together awkwardly, uniting only to deliver a disjointed, bumpy ride experience. Unfortunately, the backgrounds often seem to be the best thing on the screen.

It is hard to believe that the game has an auspicious origin, but is based on a story by Philip K. Dick, who wrote the supreme sci-fi tale Blade Runner.

Verdict: 5 out of 10. Prematurely dead sci-fi adventure set in 2019. PC, £39.99. PlayStation, £44.99.

SOLUTION TO JUMBO 174



The winner of five Oxford University Press reference books is S.P. O'Brien of Co Westmeath, Ireland

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

Q My husband and I adore attending the many dinner parties we are invited to at our friends' homes. But we also have young children and find that sometimes these events go on far into the night. As we have a daily "wake-up call" of 7am, at what point in the proceedings is it polite to make an exit? — S.C. Chelsea, London.

women (or guests of either gender) are always given the "view". This is usually facing into the restaurant, unless the establishment affords a fabulous external vista, in which case the woman can choose whether she prefers to watch the people or enjoy the view.

A Yours is a common problem. The secret is for guests always to arrive on time, so that nobody can accuse them of a desultory drop-in, and to remember that at most dinner parties it is acceptable to leave half an hour after the last course has been served. The only problem with this can be if the hostess appears to have forgotten to serve coffee, in which case your impending departure will probably prick her into action with the percolator. In this situation it is polite for the twitchy guest to wait a few minutes to enjoy a quick cup of coffee.

Q I was always brought up to address an envelope to a gentleman as "John Morgan esq." with a small "e". Please could you advise which form is correct. — David Campbell, London SW1.

A The usual form is to use a capital "E". The substitution of a small "e" appears occasionally, but is thought eccentric.

Q I was at Glydebourne recently, and as it was one of the few sunny days we have had, some men were wearing Panama hats, renewing a custom, and very necessary for balding pate! Surely a man removing his hat before entering a room, shop or reception area? I noticed elderly gentlemen doing so, as they had obviously been brought up to do. Surely this is correct? — A.J.T., address withheld.



Where did I go wrong, did I miss the vibes and is there a need to apologise? — Name and address withheld.

A No, there is no need to apologise, but you should learn by your mistake. By long tradition, dress for a wedding, unless the celebration is to include an evening affair when black tie is requested, is never specified on invitation cards. Instead, an odd kind of osmosis

It is, but it is hardly surprising that many modern men make these mistakes as they are quite simply unused to wearing hats on a regular basis and are thus unfamiliar with the traditional courtesies associated with them. Men should always remove their headgear on going inside, particularly at civilised social occasions such as country house opera festivals. And if in doubt always take them off.

takes over. In theory the male sartorial tone is set by the bride's father and the groom, but in practice it is generally assumed by all that formal day dress will be worn. In the case of "well-heeled" weddings this is invariably morning coat, teamed with waistcoat and either striped or checked trousers. Top hats are optional but are still seen, and add considerably to the occasion.

Q Recently, when dining out with a lady friend, I was faced with a quandary. The table was given was half in and half out of the restaurant and consequently I was a little uncertain of who should sit where. Should I have allowed the lady to sit with her back to the restaurant where she would be forced to face the stares and behaviour of passers-by, or should I have allowed her to sit looking into the restaurant but with her back exposed to the elements? I plumped for the latter option, but with similar situations likely to occur in the summer I would appreciate some clarification of what the proper form is. — Benjamin Claybrook, Yarm, Cleveland.

Q This may seem like a terribly silly question, so please forgive me, but after years of theatre and concert-going, I still wonder if there is a "correct" way to clap. — Lady P.J., London SW3.

A The well-bred applauder always makes sure that only one hand is actually doing the clapping, while the other is held quite still underneath at a 90 degree angle. Whether it is left or right is entirely a matter of manual preference, although those who take their applause seriously conclude that the left should be active and the right passive. The important thing is that both hands should not be simultaneously bashed together like cymbals. Also, remember that it is bad manners, no matter how exuberant your feelings are for the performance, to begin clapping until the last note has completely faded. — The author is Associate Editor of GQ

A You made the best of a far from ideal situation. Unless there are really extenuating meteorological circumstances such as waves lashing on a windy poop deck or Siberia-style draughts,

the last time I saw her." — Editor of the new International Who's Who which lists Scottish model Honor Fraser's date of birth as 1994



DAN BLAIR PILOT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

FELLOW TOREENS! WE LOST POWER TO THE HORRENDOUS BLAIR BECAUSE WE FAILED TO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE...



...SO NOW WE ARE ON A TOUR TO HEAR WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY TO US!

YES, O MIGHTY SINUSED-ONE!



ER...WHERE IS EVERYONE?

WORD WATCHING

by Philip Howard

LADINO a. A brigand b. Clover c. A Swiss Italian

MOLA a. A chest-protector b. A back tooth c. A harbour wall

NERF a. A boring twit b. An embryonic lizard c. To bump

HUARACHE a. A sandals b. A Mexican dance c. Chilli sauce

Answers on page 35

TWO BRAINS

by Raymond Keene

The second Mind Sports Olympiad, which features chess, bridge, IQ and hosts the finals of The Times Crossword Championship, takes place from August 24-30 at the Novotel in Hammersmith. For information call 0171-485 9146 or write to: Mind Sports Olympiad, PO Box 13388, London NW3 2ZF, with SAE.

Question 1 Which name links the following? Groan Oases Andronicus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus?

Question 2 How many queens can be placed on an open chessboard of 64 squares without any threatening any other — what are the optimal squares?

Answers on page 35

CROSS WORDS

by Brian Greer

Alec Robins, an important figure in the postwar refinement of cryptic crosswords, died on June 28 at the age of 80. He contributed, over many years, Everyman puzzles in The Observer, Listener puzzles (under the pseudonym Zander) and he was Cactus in The Guardian.

However, I want to concentrate on his book, The ABC of Crosswords (originally Teach Yourself Crosswords), now unfortunately out of print. If you can find a copy in a second-hand bookshop, snap it up.

The extent of the influence of the book on my own development is hard to gauge, but I agree in almost every respect with the principles that he set out

with admirable clarity. For example, he put forward for consideration the following clue for LEGALLY: A limb and an associate, in a lawful manner (7). The components are there — LEG + ALLY = LEGALLY. But as he points out, and I could not agree more, the clue simply does not make sense.

As an example of his precision, consider this clue for PLAIN: I am included in the plan, it's obvious (5). "What the ingenious clue-writer must aim at," he wrote, "is a form of words which is not only misleading but also both accurate and fair." Precisely!

● The writer is Crossword Editor of The Times Solutions on page 35

PICTURE LINE



Trust me, I am a friend of Peter Mandelson

READERS are invited to suggest what was said by Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott (right).

This picture will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted. Send your "speech bubble" suggestions — only on postcards, please — with your name and address to: PictureLine, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The Editor's decision is final.

The closing date for entries is Wednesday, July 22.

Last week's winning caption (left) was submitted by Nick Fairides of Birmingham.



QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"This is what we mean by education, education, education." — Chancellor Gordon Brown announces an extra £19 billion for... education.

"In the past 12 months too few of our new comedies have been successes." — John Birt as the BBC bids for a sharply increased licence fee.

"She looked considerably more than three

the last time I saw her." — Editor of the new International Who's Who which lists Scottish model Honor Fraser's date of birth as 1994

"In Britain, if you've got a title then you also don't have any brains." — Edward Windsor, formerly known as Prince

"Godzilla, the 400ft turkey." — The Independent reviews the latest US movie sensation.

"I claim this victory for the National Front" — French far-righting leader Jean-Marie Le Pen muscles in on France's football glory.

"The 15-minute walk down the Garvaghy Road would be in the shadow of the coffins of three little boys who wouldn't even know what the Orange Order is about." — The Order's chaplain for Co Armagh

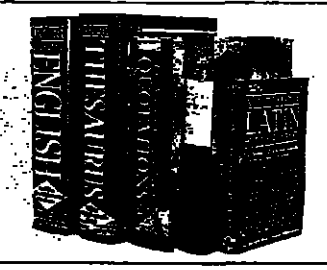
"I don't know who Tony Blair is but I do

know the cost of fags." — 12-year-old mother interviewed by The Mirror.

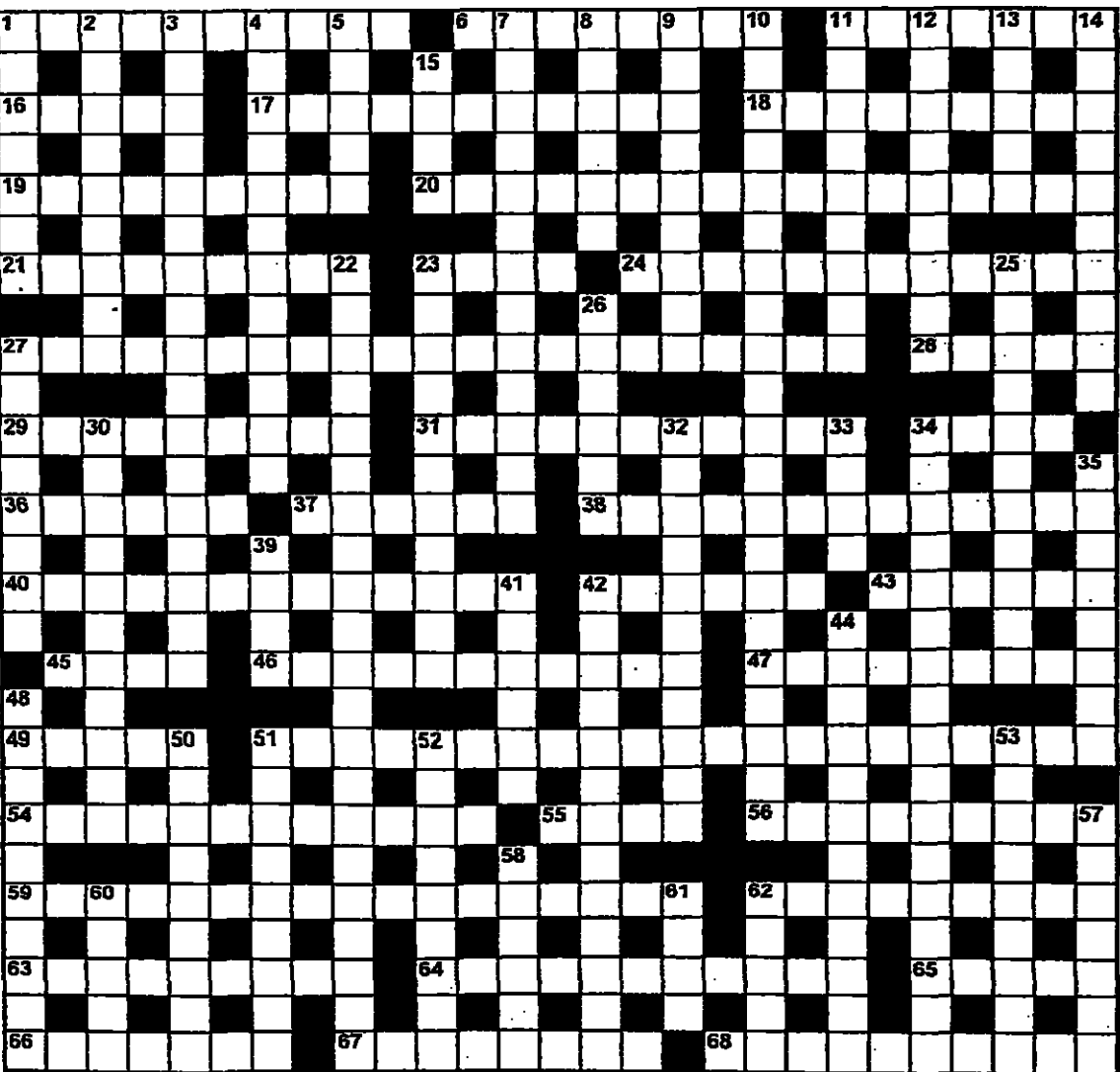
"I hope I don't die before Harry Secombe. I don't want him singing at my funeral." — Spike Milligan jokes at memorial service for Alf Garnett creator Johnny Speight.

"Just a fun thing." — Tiger Woods after driving 439 yards from the eighth tee at Royal Birkdale while practicing for the Open.

JUMBO CROSSWORD XXX



The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be a collection of five Oxford University Press titles, the world's most trusted reference books, valued at more than £100. Included are The Oxford English Reference Dictionary and The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Quotations. Entries should be sent to: The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Thursday, June 18. The name of the winner will be published on June 20.

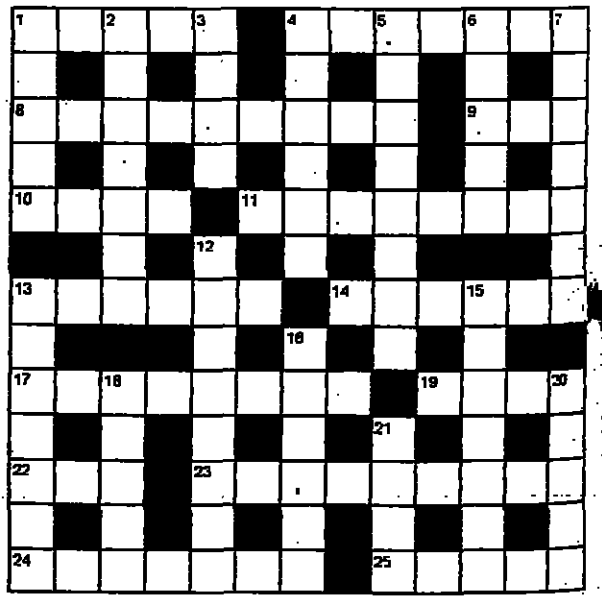


NAME: ADDRESS: POSTCODE:

ACROSS

- 1 They may push warmly, well entertained by fantastic host (3,7)
6 Well-read class originally learned repetition's not on (8)
11 About to back part of UK, established precedent (4-3)
16 Guy in USA would have spelt out his explosive ingredient thus (5)
17 Starts to dun experienced thespian about one kind of tax — it's a turn-off (1,1)
18 One may be in good odour, having taken on BA in trouble (5,4)
19 Claimed to have made a speech in favour (6,3)
20 Having a puff to celebrate one's own promotion (4-13)
21 Somewhere on the Baltic, excitedly haul it in — angler's first (9)
23 Ship a kind of salmon (4)
24 Eccentricity shown by a king — one dressed in new cape (12)
27 Beaming, but not exactly over the moon (8,12)
28 Cut off — someone being silly (5)
29 Sailor sounding exhausted, starting to pull in canvas (9)
31 Transferring risk, check can upset in certain case (11)
34 Europeans not opening bars (4)
36 Wandered round the staff carrying a ste (9)
37 Following small diagram in bringing back the old model (6)
38 It all came out after most of investigation attended by difficulties (13)
40 Study a psychologist, and chase madly about for evidence of malicious glee (13)
42 Third of pages in printed work, about a very old tree (3,3)
43 One may depict old reformer abandoning church (6)
45 Listen to expression of agreement, if repeated (4)
46 Attempt to hide donkeys in mountain slope before noon (11)
47 One may put on a coat with hard-wearing lining (9)
49 Saunter about with low companion (5)
51 Astronomical amount of work undertaken on campus (7,14)
54 I run newer, fresh courses in part of Scotland (12)
55 Drug of some help about to be swallowed (4)
56 How to describe Edwards, once in the same exalted position? (9)
59 See me end up with honours, but failing poetry (10,7)
62 Way simple style of furnishing's about back in (9)
63 Head of the family is dry about an outing cut short (9)
64 Miss using this device? It could clarify things (8,3)
65 Expression of joy in Australasia (5,2)
66 Filled theatre, and allowed entertainment to start (7)
67 They may dampen spirits at first, with solemn requests (8)
68 Invite romance, having way to be most flattering (10)

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1461

- ACROSS
1 Rabbit cage (5)
4 Ready for riding: lumbered (7)
8 Spiteful (9)
9 Princess — G & S (5)
10 Top-billing performer (4)
11 Ceiling window; a 10? (8)
13 Serrated (6)
14 Of racial origin (6)
17 Defensive force (8)
19 Place skin blemish (4)
22 Mischiefous sprite (3)
23 Perilous (6)
24 Widespread; an officer (7)
25 A devil (5)
DOWN
1 Eg. falcon-headed god (5)
2 Beer glass (7)
3 Ring; piece of croquet equipment (4)
4 Short and strong (6)
5 Abandoned, wretched (6)
6 Being economical with truth (5)
7 Severe, forceful (measured) (7)
12 Perplex (8)
13 Embracing; keeping close to (7)
15 Roman sea god (7)
16 Tiny bite to eat (6)
18 Come to maturity (5)
20 General direction: fashion (5)
21 Feudal holding (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1460
ACROSS: 1 Jaws 3 Hap(b)sburg 9 Hinge 10 Paraded 16 Buccolic 12 Term 14 Limpid 16 Choral 18 Bash 19 Aladdin 22 Undying 23 Coast 24 Strength 25 Rein DOWN: 1 John Bull 2 Wing Commander 4 Aspect 5 Scratch 6 Undergraduate 7 Gods 8 Seal 13 Plankton 15 Ich Dien 17 Gagger 20 Arch 21 Puss

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